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Palestinian Affairs

U.S. Secretary of State Visits Jerusalem Palestinians

Said Ready for Self-Rule

TA1904182291 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1715 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] The Palestinian leadership in the territories held a news conference in Ramallah this evening on the question of who will participate on their behalf in the meeting with Secretary of State Baker, and what topics will be discussed. The PLO headquarters in Tunis has allowed only Faysal al-Husayni, Radwan Abu-'Ayyash, and Ilyas Frayj to meet with Baker, but the leadership in the territories elected Faysal al-Husayni, Hannan 'Ashrawi from Ramallah, and Zakariyya al-Agha from Gaza instead. Our correspondent in the territories Amir Hay reports from the news conference:

[Begin recording] [Hay] Faysal al-Husayni and his colleagues raised two new points this evening that they will suggest to Secretary Baker during their meeting tomorrow: Palestinian readiness for self-rule in the territories for an interim period, and acceptance of an Israeli presence in the territories during that period. Still, all this depends on Baker's replies to the 11 questions which were presented in a document to the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem on Tuesday.

The following are the main questions for which Secretary Baker will have to provide answers: What will the scope of Israeli presence during the interim period be, and what powers will the Palestinians have during self-rule in that period? Will settlement activity in the territories be frozen at the initial stages of negotiations, and what kind of international guarantees will be given for the interim arrangement? Baker will likewise be called upon to reply to questions on the status of the Palestinian delegation in the regional conference, and the legal foundations for the convocation of regional conference.

[Abu-'Ayyash—in English] Three notable Palestinian leaders will meet Mr. Baker. They are Mr. Faysal al-Husayni, Dr. Zakariyya al-Agha from Gaza, and Dr. Hannan 'Ashrawi from Ramallah. We believe the meeting of tomorrow is very crucial; it can decide the future of such meetings. I hope that Mr. Baker would have real practical answers for their questions.

[Hay] Contrary to the previous meetings with Baker, only these three Palestinian notables will arrive at the U.S. Consulate. This indicates two things: That the Americans see the three as the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian population of the territories; and that the smaller the number of participants in the meeting and the discussions tomorrow, the more substantive they become. [end recording]

Baker Meeting Called 'Constructive'

TA2004090991 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0844 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Report from the U.S. Consulate in West Jerusalem by Arye Gus—live]

[Text] The meeting between the three representatives of the Palestinian delegation and U.S. Secretary of State Baker ended a few minutes ago. James Baker has already left the place without saying a single word to the awaiting journalists. Still, Faysal al-Husayni who headed the Palestinian delegation said the following remarks upon leaving the meeting.

[Begin al-Husayni recording in English] I can say that in this meeting we found it is more, the atmosphere of this meeting is more constructive than the other two meetings. We have cautious optimism, and we would like not to make any other comments because we would like matters going on, not giving the Israelis to stop it. [sentence as heard] [end recording]

As you could hear, this is an initial declaration by Faysal al-Husayni who expressed reserved satisfaction about this meeting and said the meeting was constructive. Another participant in the delegation, Zakariyya al-Agha from Gaza, said upon leaving the meeting that the atmosphere was better than in the previous talk which was held over a week earlier. The Palestinians received replies to the questions they submitted and now want to study these answers.

The Palestinian delegates are currently making their way to the al-Haqawati Theater in East Jerusalem, where they will hold an impromptu news conference and where we expect to hear more about what they have and have not achieved as well as their impressions from the meeting.

'Significant Progress' Claimed

TA2004101091 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0930 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State Baker's visit to Israel has ended. He left Israel for Jordan and will then go to Egypt. Baker will meet King Husayn at al-'Aqabah, to which he flew from Ben-Gurion Airport, as reported by our correspondent at the airport Yaron Ben-'Ami.

Baker met with three Palestinian leaders from the territories this morning, and a news conference is under way at the al-Haqawati Theater in East Jerusalem. Our correspondent 'Ido Shargil reports:

Good day to you. The news conference ended a few seconds ago. The meeting between Baker and the three Palestinians—Faysal al-Husayni; Dr Zakariyya al-Agha from Gaza; and Professor Hannan 'Ashrawi, a Bi'r Zayt University lecturer—took place at the U.S. Consulate in West Jerusalem and lasted over two hours.

During the news conference the three delegation members refused to say exactly what took place and which

points were or were not agreed upon. The three were in agreement that they are optimistic, and that progress—significant progress—was made on the important issues on the agenda. The three emphasized that they do not constitute a delegation for negotiations, as such a delegation can only be a PLO one. They said they had met with Baker in order to better explain their positions.

Faysal al-Husayni said there were no agreements since they were not there to agree or disagree; they only asked questions, and very few answers were given. The three reiterated that the PLO is their legitimate and exclusive representative. They also referred to an international conference, stating they prefer European sponsorship for such a conference.

Also raised were the issues of settlements and deportations. On the settlements issue, the three said they had indeed agreed with Baker that Israel's policy in the territories, especially in the settlements sphere, cannot last if positive, peace-seeking negotiations are desired.

The news conference has ended. It is not known whether additional meetings will be held with Baker. Let us mention again that the three participants are from the Fatah mainstream. No representatives of other PLO groups or organizations participated in the meeting.

Baker Talks Discussed

LD2004224791 Algiers Domestic Service in French 1800 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Excerpts] The U.S. Secretary of state continues his Middle East tour. [passage omitted]

James Baker was in Israel, where he had separate meetings with the Israeli leaders and a restricted Palestinian delegation. This third visit ended today with almost complete silence from the Tel Aviv government and by optimistic statements by the Palestinian delegation, which handed over to James Baker a memorandum containing the immutable national foundations of the Palestinian people. Professor Hannan 'Ashrawi was one of the three members of the Palestinian delegation to have had talks with the U.S. secretary of state. Bahi Barkat asked her what changes there were in the U.S. position on the question:

[Begin recording] ['Ashrawi] There is no basic change; however, there is a flexibility in the approach to the realities, as well as an attempt to understand the rights and the demands of the Palestinians. There is also greater dynamism and sympathy toward the Palestinians in the territories and Kuwait. There is also a willingness to act and to exercise influence on the Israeli authorities to lead them to concrete changes on the ground.

[Barkat] Second question: Will there be a resumption of the talks between the PLO and the United States?

['Ashrawi] There is no doubt about it. At some point, the dialogue will resume. The U.S. must recognize the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. That will take a little time, time for the United States to understand that the PLO is incontrovertible [incontournable] from every point of view, which is something which the Americans implicitly recognize. [end recording]

Communists: Session 'Blow' to PLO

JN2104171991 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1646 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] The Communist Party organization in the Janin area has issued a statement on the meeting between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Palestinian figures in Jerusalem. The statement sees in the session with Baker a blow to the PLO and our people's struggle.

Bir Zayt Figure on Benefit of Meeting With Baker

TA1904175591 Jerusalem AL-FAJR in Arabic 15 Apr 91 pp 12, 11

[Article by Dr. Riyad al-Maliki, lecturer at Bir Zayt University Engineering College: "The Meeting With Baker"]

[Text] In the wake of Secretary Baker's recent visit to the region, a number of questions, views, and positions arose about the usefulness of meeting with him and about its results on the Palestinian level. Out of my responsibility toward my people, I have to address the following points:

1. No decision was made by the Palestinian leadership in Tunis on the meeting, namely whether to attend it or boycott it, as a result of the conflicting positions between the various parties within the PLO. These parties expressed their position on the meeting through statements carried by the news media, among which was brother Yasir 'Arafat's desire to hold the meeting, whereas this was opposed by Dr. George Habash and the majority of the Palestinian parties participating in the PLO Executive Committee. They called for boycotting the meeting. Therefore, what the news media said about the PLO's agreement to the meeting or the PLO's role in forming the Palestinian team that attended the meeting is not true.

2. In his meeting with the Palestinian side, Secretary Baker affirmed the following:

a. The meeting was held at the request of the Palestinian side in the occupied territories.

b. He rejected any role for the PLO in any peace process between the parties in the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the Palestinian problem.

c. He refused to force Israel to stop the settlement drive in the occupied Palestinian territories.

d. He refused to accept the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

e. He refused to discuss the issue of Jerusalem.

3. Secretary Baker did not propose anything new or different from the stated U.S. position. He also did not provide any acceptable answers that give the minimal response to the national Palestinian program. The question posed is over the usefulness and benefits of the meeting. Such meetings serve only as a conduit for normalizing continuing contacts and relations between Palestinian dignitaries in the occupied territories and U.S. officials, despite the continuing U.S. intransigence that disavows Palestinian national rights and is supportive of Israel, as affirmed by Secretary Baker himself at the meeting.

4. More than one dignitary who attended the meeting emphasized pessimism over its outcome, as stated at the news conference held in the wake of the meeting.

As a result of the above, it is necessary for us to pose the following question to those who participated at the meeting: For how long will contacts and meetings continue with the American side, when we take the goals and benefits into consideration? Hence, it is necessary for all of us to determine our stance toward the United States, especially since the United States has already determined its stance toward the Palestinian people, their leadership, their cause, and their legitimate rights when it affirmed:

a. Its suspension of the dialogue with the PLO, its refusal to give the PLO any role in the peace process, and its refusal to recognize the PLO's sole legitimate representation of the Palestinian people.

b. Its refusal to recognize all the inalienable and legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, foremost of which is their right to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state whose capital is Jerusalem. The United States suffices only with recognizing the so- called political rights of the Palestinians and with liquidating the rest of our inalienable rights on the Palestinian and international levels.

c. Its rejection of a plenary international conference with PLO participation on an equal footing with other parties, and its attempt to impose the regional conference concept as proposed by Israel.

d. Its declared war against the PLO and its attempt to create an alternative leadership in the occupied territories that would deal with U.S. plans to implement the concept of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and impose self-rule on the Palestinian residents in the occupied territories.

e. Its insistence on having a monopoly in settling the Palestinian problem, its use of double standards in dealing with the issues of nations, and its refusal to apply any pressure on Israel to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy.

The target here is the intifadah, it is the PLO, it is our inalienable national rights. The target is the human being, the land, and the cause.

VOP Views U.S. Efforts To Solve Palestine Issue

LD1904220591 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Brothers, there is talk in U.S. political circles about crystalizing new U.S. ideas to solve the Arab-Zionist conflict in all its aspects, including the Palestinian issue. Some optimists go so far as to say that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker gave the Zionist ambassador in Washington a message to the terrorist Yitzhaq Shamir and his foreign minister, David Levi, containing a clear signal on the need for Israel to acknowledge UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and that the construction of Zionist settlements in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan should stop.

The fact is, however, that the United States' record in the Arab-Zionist conflict shows that U.S. Administrations have never adhered firmly to international legitimacy. Their record also shows that the credibility of U.S. policy in our area has always been subject to uncertainty, doubt, and open alignment. Despite all this, the United States and its leadership of the Western alliance against Iraq—despite what the United States has done in the name of international legitimacy—the United States in the post-Gulf war period is facing challenges in the international and regional arenas.

In the European and Soviet arena, Washington cannot continue its traditional policy in the Middle East because the Europeans, Soviets, and Japan also see that international influence must be exploited in the Middle East in favor of international legitimacy and the cause of achieving peace and justice for our Palestinian people.

In the regional sphere, the United States today is aware more than at any time before that gaining credibility and the confidence of the Arab and Islamic peoples is not as easy as when it achieved its military victory in the Gulf. We do not wish to explain the problems and complex situations and crises which the United States will face in the Middle East if it continues to look at our issues with one eye. But we would like to explain that the wave of hostility toward the United States is caused by its political behavior and not by the Arabs' hate for the United States. We, the Arabs, do not hate just for the sake of hating. The road to gaining the confidence of the Arab peoples passes through a firm U.S. stand toward Zionist intransigence and the policies of expansion and annexation pursued by Zionist governments.

Without U.S. firmness and U.S. enthusiasm, as was used in implementing international legitimacy in the Gulf, the Bush administration will become like its predecessors.

Al-Husayni Views Israel, Jerusalem, Intifadah

AU1904101991 Vienna KURIER in German 19 Apr 91 p 3

[Report by Hans Rauscher from Jerusalem on interview with Palestinian leader Faysal al-Husayni; place, date of interview not given: "Palestinian Leader Al-Husayni in Interview with KURIER: 'There Must Be Talks With the Israelis'"]

[Text] One problem of the peace process in the Middle East is finding Palestinians who are ready for compromise. Faysal al-Husayni from Jerusalem was the head of a delegation that had initial talks with U.S. Secretary of State Baker and will have more of such talks in the future. At a meeting with Vienna Mayor Zilk in Jerusalem, al-Husayni demonstrated moderate optimism: "Our talks with Baker were constructive, he understands our problems. But now we have to achieve really substantial results; there must be talks with the Israelis without any preconditions." The Israelis refuse to talk to PLO representatives, and al-Husayni is the unofficial PLO leader in Jerusalem. Concerning the Gulf war, he says: "We condemned the occupation of Kuwait from the very beginning; following this war there is the chance for a new era, for a new beginning." Al-Husayni evaded a question about 'Arafat's support for Saddam Husayn, but there is hardly any doubt that he considers it wrong.

Al-Husayni on the basic position of the Palestinians: "In the past, up to 1988, our struggle was for 'pure justice,' for our right to the whole of Palestine—from the Jordan River to the sea. This is no longer the case. We recognize that there cannot be any pure justice for us, that we must come to a compromise. But we cannot pursue a policy of small steps now, we must set down once and for all: Here is Israel with its borders, here is a Palestinian state with its borders!"

Concerning the problem of Jerusalem, a city which both the Arabs and Israelis claim for themselves, he said: "I love Jerusalem, I suffer under its division. I see two cities, one free, the other one occupied. Our solution: two capital cities in a united city, with open borders and a joint city administration. I do not know how this may work exactly, but it must work."

Al-Husayni said about the intifadah: "The intifadah is a success because it has made the world aware again of the problem of the Palestinians. It is not a military operation, and it will not liberate us. But it is a psychological victory for us, because we have taken matters into our own hands."

Al-Husayni warns that extremists on both sides are on the march: "Among the Israelis and the Palestinians. If the Israelis do not talk to us, the moderates, then they will soon have to deal with the men with the beards." al-Husayni refers to the fact that the fundamentalist Muslims already have many followers among the Palestinians. The terrorists, who have been infiltrating Israel from Jordan recently, belong to these groups.

'Abd-Rabbuh Announces Central Council's Meetings

NC1904120991 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1140 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Tunis, 19 Apr (MENA)—Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, head of the PLO Executive Committee's Information Department, told MENA today that the Palestinian Central Council's meetings will be held in Tunis on Sunday, 21 April.

'Abd-Rabbuh pointed out that the Central Council will discuss a plan to support the intifadah and will touch on the recent developments, including the U.S. proposals. The council will also discuss Palestinian-Arab relations following the Gulf war.

'Abd-Rabbuh added that the Central Council will make the necessary preparations for the Palestine National Council's next meeting.

Meeting Opens

LD2204091291 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 0600 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] The proceedings of the Palestinian Central Council began in Tunis yesterday evening under the chairmanship of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sa'ih, in the presence of President Yasir 'Arafat, and with the participation of representatives of the factions of the Palestinian revolution grouped within the PLO—Fatah, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Communist Party, and the Palestine Liberation Front.

A Palestinian source has indicated the council is examining the latest developments regarding the Palestinian issue, the situation in the occupied territories, and the moves made by the Palestinian leadership in the light of James Baker's tour of the Arab region and his talks in Jerusalem with Palestinian figures.

The Palestinian Central Council, which is the link between the PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian National Council, is also assessing the repercussions of the Gulf war on the PLO's relations with Arab and European states. The council is expected to fix the date of the 20th session of the Palestinian National Council, which has not convened since November 1988, when it proclaimed the establishement of the state of Palestine.

The council is also paving the way to unite the Palestinian ranks by clearing the air between all the Palestinian factions and helping them resolve their internal problems in order to confront the challenges now facing the Palestinian cause.

Algeria Said Mediating Between Lebanon, PLO

PM2204085891 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Apr 91 pp 1, 4

[Muhammad 'Ali al-Qulaybi report: "Algerian Mediation Between Lebanon and PLO"]

[Text] Tunis, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Palestinian and Lebanese sources have revealed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Algeria is currently mediating between Lebanon and the PLO to settle their differences, especially with regard to the extension of Lebanese authority over the whole of Lebanese territory and disarming Palestinians in Lebanon. According to these sources, Libya is likely to join these reconciliatory efforts through the strong relationship between Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. The sources do not rule out that the Algerian capital could host a Lebanese-Palestinian meeting in the coming days, before the 30 April deadline set by the Lebanese authorities for disarming Lebanese militias and Palestinian forces in Lebanon.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that at his recent meetings with the Tunisian, Algerian, Libyan, and Moroccan leaders Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat sought these states' help in securing guarantees from the Lebanese Government concerning the provision of security protection as well as education, health, and cultural facilities and employment for the almost 300,000 Palestinians resident in Lebanon, in return for handing over Palestinian arms.

Muhsin Ibrahim al-Amin, secretary general of the Organization of Communist Action in Lebanon, who is currently conducting mediation approved by the Lebanese state between the PLO and Lebanon, arrived last Saturday in Algiers from Tunis, where he held a lengthy meeting with the Palestinian president, which was also attended by a number of Palestinian officials.

Lebanese sources have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Muhsin Ibrahim volunteered to carry out the mission by virtue of his good relations with the PLO and the ministers entrusted with disarming the Palestinians, and especially with Muhsin Dallul, Nabih Birri, and Walid Junblatt. The sources denied that Muhsin Ibrahim could have been entrusted officially with carrying out the mission by the Lebanese Government or President Ilyas al-Hirawi. The sources added that the Algerian ambassador in Beirut was the link between the Algerian Government and Muhsin Ibrahim.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that the Palestinian leadership emphasized to the Lebanese intermediary that what applies to the armed militias in Lebanon does not apply to the armed Palestinian presence in Lebanon, since it is a much broader issue than that. First, there is the political relationship between the Lebanese Government and the PLO and the need to clarify this relationship on the basis of Arab summit resolutions, to open an office for the PLO in Beirut, to protect the Palestinians' interests and rights in Lebanon and to secure their social and economic life as well as other freedoms. There also is another matter, namely, the protection of Palestinians in the camps from Israeli aggression—this is a fundamental issue. The purpose of the Palestinian weapons has always been, and remains, to confront this aggression and the Israeli occupation.

The Palestinian side emphasized its respect for Lebanon's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, as well as its support for Lebanon in its struggle to liberate its territory from the Israeli occupation. The Palestinian leadership presented the Lebanese intermediary with a number of proposals, including the development of joint Lebanese-Palestinian action, the inclusion of the issue of disarming the Palestinians in Lebanon in the framework of the future relations between the Lebanese authorities and the PLO, and changing the name of the Palestinian forces in Lebanon to the "Palestinian Liberation Army" whose task would be confined to protecting the camps from Israeli aggression and organizing life inside.

Sources close to the Lebanese intermediary emphasized to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the Lebanese Government does not object to the existence of the Palestinian Liberation Army—but only outside Lebanon. Nor does it object to this army's joining any Arab army. The sources pointed out that the Lebanese authorities are determined to disarm all armed militias, both Lebanese and non-Lebanese. Thus the decision is irreversible, and the the Lebanese Government cannot compromise on it, even if this were to lead it to use force and seek the Syrian Army's help.

It seems that the Lebanese Government has provided guarantees of the protection of the Palestinian camps from some Lebanese militia elements, by deploying the Lebanese Army around these camps to stop any stranger from entering them, thus avoiding a repetition of what happened in Sabra and Shatila. It also seems that the Palestinian side has initially agreed to hand over its arms.

According to informed sources, the Lebanese Government's decision to disarm Lebanese and Palestinian militias in Lebanon is an irreversible regional and international decision.

Algeria

Minister Views Call for Political Strike

LD2104200191 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] In the political arena, there is just more than a month before the beginning of the election campaign. There is a need for calm. At the same time as some political parties exchange accusations of arousing chaos and insecurity, most of the times the accusations are addressed to a certain political party more than others. Recently, there was talk about some sides dealing with foreign quarters. For instance, the interior minister talked openly in a television discussion program about the conspiracy in Algeria by elements dealing with foreign intelligence authorities. Mohammedi said that the people should understand the gravity of that situation. Yesterday in the television discussion program, the interior minister classified violence into two categories: criminal violence, which does not call for concern in our country; and political violence or the violent talk which is used, according to the minister, by political leaders. This affects the behavior of the youth and incites them to be violent. The strike for which eight political parties and the Islamic Salvation Front, on its own, called was described by the interior minister as an illegal political strike and as tantamount to civil disobedience.

Arrests Made After Violent Incidents

LD1804224091 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 18 Apr 91

[Excerpts] The incidents witnessed at a school mosque in al-Hennaya town, Tlemcen Province, on 'Id al-Fitr, the day before yesterday. New threads have been uncovered in investigations and searches by the security authorities in the province. Regarding that, the public prosecutor at the Tlemcen court says:

[Begin recording] [Prosecutor] After the incidents witnessed in al-Hennaya on 'Id al-Fitr—and after the arrest of two people who were caught red-handed in acts that took place on Wednesday [17 April], as result of which a number of people were injured by firearms and cold steel—the security authorities in Tlemcen Province, were able to uncover that the same two people with another four were also responsible for a number of incidents in the region in [words indistinct], particularly the stealing of detonators, material for explosives in [words indistinct].

[Unidentified reporter] Is the case a political one or something else?

[Prosecutor] [passage omitted] It may said that those people belong to an extremist religious trend. The precise political nature is not yet known, but it is possible to specify the [words indistinct] in the sphere of religious extremism. [end recording]

Correction—Local Radio To Begin Broadcasts

LD2004192791

The following correction pertains to the item headlined "Local Radio To Begin Broadcasting 20 Apr," published in the 18 April Near East 7 South Asia DAILY REPORT, page 3.

Column two, first graf, make read: [Excerpts] Radio Saoura [referring to the Saoura Valley] is the name///correcting radio station name, supplying editorial notation;

Column two, last graf, sentence one make read/ //[Correspondent Nasseri] Radio Saoura will broadcast its///correcting radio station name.

Egypt

Baker in Cairo To Discuss Mideast Peace Issues

'Abd-al-Majid Comments

NC2004141091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1335 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 20 Apr (MENA)—Egypt welcomes the efforts to establish peace in the Middle East and to find a just and permanent solution to the Palestinian issue on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which would lead to the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, said today prior to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's arrival in Cairo later this evening.

'Abd-al-Majid said he will hold a preliminary meeting with Baker tonight to exchange views, discuss the results of Baker's talks in Israel, and hear the U.S. view on the current Israeli and Arab proposals to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue.

Baker Arrives

NC2004155091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1535 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 20 Apr (MENA)—U.S. Secretary of State James Baker arrived in Cairo from al-'Aqabah this afternoon for a short visit to Egypt within the framework of his third tour of the Middle East.

He was received at the airport by Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and U.S. Ambassador Frank Wisner.

Mubarak Receives Baker

NC2104104291 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1015 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 21 Apr (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who is visiting Cairo, at the presidential office today.

Dr. 'Isma't 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; and U.S. Ambassador Frank Wisner also attended the meeting.

Baker arrived in Cairo yesterday on a visit that is part of his current tour of the Middle East.

'Abd-al-Majid, Baker Address Media

NC2104140091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1220 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 21 Apr (MENA)—Speaking at a joint news conference with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker following their meeting with President Husni Mubarak today, Dr. 'Isma't 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, said that the U.S. peace efforts are making good progress. He described the meeting between President Mubarak and Secretary Baker as very useful and fruitful.

The following are the highlights of the joint news conference held by Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid and Secretary Baker following the latter's 90-minute meeting with President Mubarak, which was also attended by Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid.

In a statement to journalists at the start of the news conference, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said: I am pleased to be meeting with you once again after our meeting with President Mubarak. This meeting was very useful and fruitful. I can say that the peace efforts being exerted by the United States are proceeding on course and making good progress. It is true that there are certain issues which need to be tackled, but it is equally true that there is a firm determination to find solutions to these issues. For our part, we are eager to find solutions to these issues and to see the entire process move ahead. Egypt certainly accepts and promotes the idea of a conference. There is nothing that would prevent our participation in a conference to reach a just solution in the region.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid remarked that the United States is making serious efforts in this process and that Egypt is following the matter with great interest. We seek a successful conclusion to all the very serious efforts being made by U.S. President George Bush, as well as those being made by Secretary Baker, so that we can realize our objectives in this regard, he said.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid added: Secretary Baker returned to the region just 10 days after his previous tour. This shows that there is movement. As a participant in the talks, I can say that we are eager to see these negotiations succeed. I assure you that President Mubarak is greatly interested in holding successful talks and in establishing peace between Israel and its neighbors similiar to the peace between Egypt and Israel, a peace that is here to stay. Our hope is to establish the same type of peace in connection with the Palestinian issue, to end the occupation of Arab territories, and to proceed toward the conference. This sums up the Egyptian Government's stand.

Secretry Baker then spoke. He said: I will reiterate what my friend and colleague Dr. 'Isma't 'Abd-al-Majid said. I would like to thank President Husni Mubarak and the Egyptian Government for their extremely constructive and useful contribution to the peace process. I agree with Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid that the talks with President Mubarak were very fruitful and extremely constructive. Egypt is working to advance this process through diplomatic and political contacts, and we greatly appreciate this. The United States and Egypt were partners during the events in the Gulf, and we are partners now in the efforts to give impetus to the peace process. We are seeking to give impetus to the efforts to convene a conference that would launch direct bilateral talks between Israel and its Arab neighbors and between Israel and the Palestinians. This would allow the attitudes that have prevailed on the two sides for many long years to be broken down. I am now ready to answer questions.

Asked whether he had tried to persuade Israel to attend a conference that had an international character, Baker replied: There is no need to lay stress on a particular form, and we should not stop at a word here or there. As I have said before, we must look for a way that will allow us to move the peace process forward. This is what we are trying to do. Clearly any meeting that involves six or seven countries from various parts of the world will have an international character. This is the concept we have been seeking from the outset.

Questioned about his visit to Jordan, the U.S. secretary of state said: Relations between the United States and Jordan were good for many years, but they suffered to a considerable extent because of Jordan's stand on the occupation of Kuwait. The United States, however, is interested above all in reaching peace. The United States cannot impose peace. No one can impose it. Jordan has a very important and positive role to play in the peace process. If there is going to be a peace process, then we must put aside the great disappointment the United States felt toward Jordan during the Gulf crisis, because we believe that the importance of this goal requires us to use all means in the search for peace. This is the reason for our visit to Jordan.

Baker described his visit to Jordan as good regarding the peace process. He added: There can be no peace without negotiations with all parties. This is why we are working to hold a conference. There can be no peace in this region if the parties concerned do not talk to each other about peace, as Egypt and Israel did in the past.

Asked to elaborate on his statement that Saudi Arabia may not be part of the peace process, Baker said: Your question is based on a misunderstanding. I did not say that Saudi Arabia will not be part of the peace process. Saudi Arabia is an important part of the peace process. The Saudis have an important part to play in this process, and I think my tour of the region makes this clear. After I leave Cairo, I will go to Saudi Arabia to talk with the Saudis about the peace process. I do not want to speak for the Saudi Government, but I would not expect

them to participate in the framework of political talks between Israel and its Arab neighbors and between Israel and the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, we believe that a future conference may involve discussion of such complicated matters as the environment, [word indistinct], and possibly arms limitation. In this case, I would expect Saudi Arabia to play an important part in such matters and also in stimulating the peace process. The Saudis so far have played such a role. I hope there is no misunderstanding on this issue.

Asked about Egypt's position on whether the Gulf countries should be represented in the peace conference, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said: If I may express my own point of view, I would say that all countries in the region are concerned with the peace process, although some are more directly involved than others. Therefore, I do not want to exclude any country from the efforts to bring about peace. I am certain that the Gulf countries, like the Arab countries neighboring Israel, are interested in establishing peace in the region, but I cannot speak for any other country. I can say that Egypt is interested in making the current peace efforts successful and I am certain that all other Arab countries, including the Gulf countries, are interested in making the peace process a success, in ending the Israeli occupation of Arab territory, in upholding the rights of the Palestinians, and in promoting peace, stability, and cooperation in the region. I hope I have succeeded in expressing Egypt's sincere desire for peace. As I said before, this is an issue for which we are working sincerely, as President Mubarak has said more than once. President Mubarak has said that the efforts in which the United States is engaged with us, with our brothers, and with Israel are serious and that we are all interested in holding a conference and in ensuring its success.

Baker was asked about whether the United States sees the conference as a one-day event or something more permanent. He was also asked about whether the United States expects Palestinians to be represented by a Palestinian delegation which includes Palestinians from East Jerusalem or a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. Baker said: I will not answer these questions right now, for I want this process to succeed and I want to see progress made. Let me tell you that we are holding talks with a number of countries, some of which are very sensitive. The issues discussed in the talks are also quite sensitive.

Baker added: I decided at the outset that talks would not be held through the media. We are doing everything possible to help the parties concerned sit down together. The best way to achieve this is to have their confidence. I will answer your questions when the time is right.

In response to a final question on whether he believes the ball is now in the Israeli court, Baker said: I have not yet heard the response to the proposals put forward during my latest visit, but I held a very good telephone conversation with Prime Minister Shamir. The object of this call was not to hear the response to my proposals, but to brief him on my visit to Jordan. I will tell you what I told him, which is that we have no intention of pressing for answers. It will take them some time to formulate their answers to our proposals, and we are convinced that Israel is currently working on this and that we will hear from them at the appropriate time. We are satisfied with this. My telephone conversation with Shamir was very good.

Baker Departs 21 Apr

NC2104122591 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1205 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 21 Apr (MENA)—U.S. Secretary of State James Baker left Cairo this afternoon after a one-day visit. He was received by President Husni Mubarak.

Baker also held talks with Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, on recent Middle East developments and the current efforts to solve the region's crisis.

Mahmud Sulayman, assistant foreign minister, and U.S. Ambassador Frank Wisner saw Baker off at the airport.

Treasury Secretary Brady Makes Official Visit

NC1904125991 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1520 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 19 Apr (MENA)—U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady arrived in Cairo this afternoon on a two-day visit to Egypt, during which he will be received by President Husni Mubarak.

Brady also will hold talks on economic bilateral relations with Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and with the economic group ministers.

Mubarak Receives Brady

NC2004083991 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0830 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 20 Apr (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak received U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, who is visiting Egypt, this morning.

Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri, deputy prime minister and minister of planning, Dr. Muhammad al-Razzaz, minister of finance, and U.S. Ambassador in Cairo Frank Wisner attended the meeting.

Minister on Speaker Assassination; Jordanian Role

NC1904205591 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1948 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 19 Apr (MENA)—Interior Minister Muhammad 'Abd- al-Halim Musa has stated that the prosecutor's office will announce an indictment in the case of the assassination of former People's Assembly speaker Rif'at al-Mahjub in the next few days. He said

there are currently 24 defendants in the case and that eight other suspects are still at large.

In an interview that will be published in Sunday's UKTUBAR magazine, the interior minister said that 74 Egyptians were involved with Saddam Husayn's regime and were arrested upon their return here from Iraq. Two Iraqis have also been arrested. He noted that the defendants admitted that the Iraqi authorities trained them in special camps to carry out acts of espionage and sabotage. He said they also confessed that their entry into and departure from Egypt took place through Jordanian territory via al-Nuwaybi` Port under the supervision of Jordanian and Iraqi intelligence services. He explained that this was done to protect them from being harassed by any official in these areas.

The interior minister asserted that the nation's security authorities are very vigilant in attempting to uncover plots to export terrorism to Egypt. He said that the state has not hesitated to provide the security services with all the necessary means to develop and modernize them.

He declared that security is an integral whole, with political and criminal security forces operating in an organized and ("coordinated") manner to provide stability for the citizens.

Defendant Escapes During Transport

NC2004125491 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2130 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, 20 Apr (MENA)—Interior Minister Muhammad `Abd-al-Halim Musa has issued a decision referring members of a military unit to a military tribunal for dereliction of duty. The unit was charged with transporting the defendants in the case of the assassination of former People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Rif`at al-Mahjub from Cairo to al-Minya prison yesterday. Sa'ban `Abd-al-Ghani, leader of the military wing of the Jihad Organization and the main defendant in the case, escaped as the defendants were being moved yesterday.

The unit includes three military officers, a police warrant officer, a police officer, and four soldiers.

Security authorities have launched intensive efforts to apprehend the absconder. Extensive searches are under way in the Bani Suwayf area, where the main defendant and another defendant escaped when the prison vehicle stopped near the city. The unit pursued and captured the second defendant, while the first defendant escaped.

Israeli 'Intransigence' 'No Longer Acceptable'

NC2108150691 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1240 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Commentary by Bahiy-al-Din Shu`ayb: "Respecting Legitimacy Is a Must"]

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has embarked on three tours of the Middle East in the space of six weeks, a fact which indicates the eagerness of the United States to find a way to settle the Middle East crisis. Throughout Baker's three Middle East tours, every remark that was made and every speculation that was voiced tended to indicate that the Arab side—Egypt, Syria, the Palestinians, and Jordan—gave a largely positive response to the U.S. ideas. Egypt and Syria did not hesitate long over the idea of the regional conference now being proposed to settle the Middle East crisis to replace the earlier idea of an international conference.

The Arab point of view centers on the need to resolve the crisis in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and on the principle of exchanging land for peace.

The dialogue held by Secretary Baker with leading Palestinian figures in the occupied Arab territories showed that the Palestinians are flexible politically matters, and capable of acting rationally. Any differences of views do not present a difficulty in view of the shared understanding of the essence of the Palestinian problem and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

This Arab position is not new and should surprise no one. Even before the Gulf war, the Arabs were receptive to all international proposals to resolve the crisis. The difficulty, or the obstacle, resulted from the harsh positions that are not conducive to any progress on the road to peace. Some people rightly believe that the Israelis, particularly the Shamir government, do not want a settlement and do not want peace in the sense that the world understands this word.

After hundreds of hours of U.S. and European dialogue with Israeli leaders, it has become clear that Shamir's government wants to gain everything at one go, even without giving the Palestinian side anything in return.

Political logic dictates that a settlement can be reached through the acceptance of a certain measure of mutual concessions. These concessions took shape in the principle of exchanging land for peace. This is why Israeli intransigence is no longer acceptable.

Shamir's government does not want to stop building settlements in the occupied Arab territories, although these settlements constitute a flagrant violation of the rights of the Palestinian people. The settlements are also a daily source of friction between extremist Jewish elements and the Palestinians.

The international community has condemned the building of Jewish settlements, but the Israeli leaders have not paid much heed to this condemnation. Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi said recently, We have to continue to build settlements regardless of what others have to say against that policy. Ariel Sharon said in a television debate with the U.S. national security advisor that the building of settlements is the policy of the entire Israeli Government and that he, in his capacity as housing minister, is simply putting this policy into practice.

We should note here that the United States has missed no opportunity to voice its opposition to this policy and has expressed its strong dismay at and total rejection of it. But the United States so far has stopped short of taking any measure that would convince Shamir's government that its dismay has been translated into decisive action.

There is no doubt that the significance of Israel's policy of settlements lies in the fact that it shows that Israel believes the West Bank and Gaza are Israeli territory. Israel believes that if the current situation necessitates the residence of Palestinians in these lands, then Israel has to accept the Palestinians as people with rights on that land. Israel does not mind giving the Palestinians a measure of self-rule to run their daily affairs, but without this self-rule being linked in any way with the land.

Therefore, all Israeli measures in the occupied Arab territories place obstacles to any progress toward peace. We believe that this specific point will thwart many peace moves unless Washington takes steps to place matters in the proper context.

In the aftermath of the Gulf war, legitimacy has a certain meaning it lacked in the past. Before the Gulf war, legitimacy was an abstract and dry legal term, but now legitimacy means that the world should stand firmly against anyone who wants to attack legitimacy, regardless of whatever pretexts that person is using.

Libya

Editorial on UN Resolution on Kurdish Refugees

LD2104201991 Tripoli JANA in English 1725 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Washington, al-Tayr [April] 21, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—America is seeking to hijack the Resolution of the Security Council Number 688 on the problem of Iraqi Kurdish refugees and interpret it in line with American objectives of intervention in the internal affairs of Iraq and persist in its violation of Iraqi sovereignty. American officials declared that they have more flexible interpretation of the resolution after the secretary general of the United Nations expressed his concern that such act would constitute a violation of the Iraqi sovereignty. The spokesman for American State Department Marlin Fitzwater said: We believe that Resolution 688 grants total authority in taking such acts. On its part the American TV network CNN asserted that the resolution calls upon the secretary general of the United Nations to use all resources at his disposal to help the Iraqi Kurdish refugees but the resolution did not refer to the sending or use of forces which was interpreted as a blatant American violation of the said Security Council resolution. Meanwhile, officials of international peace keeping forces for south Iraq that they have no mandate to protect Iraqi Kurdish refugees in north Iraq. [sentence as received] Moreover, the American administration is seeking to cover up its intervention by force in the internal affairs of Iraq under the guise of a meeting which took place between President Bush and the secretary general of the United Nations and discussion of the so called setting up and protecting camps. Bush admitted this week that the setting up of international peace keeping forces in those camps are not an easy matter saying that might require a Security Council resolution and that the matter was a complex one. However, the delegates of China and the USSR will not support any resolution in this respect.

Basic People's Congresses Begin Meetings

LD2104034991 Tripoli JANA in English 1644 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Tripoli, al-Tayr [April] 20, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—In reassertion of direct people's democracy and entrenchment of people's authority, the masses of the basic people's congresses this evening began their meetings of the 2nd ordinary session for 1991 throughout great Jamahiriyah to discuss items on their agenda.

Malian Delegation Arrives, Praises Ties

LD2104181491 Tripoli JANA in English 1642 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Tripoli, al-Tayr [April] 21, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—Lieutenant Colonel Kafoukouni Kouni, member of the Malian Provisional Committee for Popular Salvation and commander of the ground forces, and the delegation in his company arrived in Tripoli this afternoon on a visit to great Jamahiryah. The Malian guest is accompanied by Athman Tiari and Sidi Kamara, both members of the provisional committee, and Lieutenant Colonel Bakari Kolibali, the minister for internal security. Lieutenant Colonel Kafoukouni made a statement to JANA asserting this his visit to great Jamahiryah came within the framework of good neighborliness and friendly and fraternal ties linking the Libyan Arab people with the Malian people. He expressed his optimism on the development of relations between great Jamahiryah and Mali for the mutual interest of the two countries' peoples.

'Source' Denies Claim by Ethiopian President

LD2004193191 Tripoli JANA in English 1412 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Tripoli, 20 April JANA—A source at the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation refuted the claim made by the Ethiopian President Mengistu that Libya and other countries were assisting opponents to his regime.

The source stressed that these accusations were ill founded reaffirming that the foreign policy of great Jamahiriyah was based on non intervention in the

internal affairs of African countries and that the claim of the Ethiopian [passage indistinct].

Mauritania

EEC Official Welcomes Democratic Efforts

AB2004171891 Paris AFP in French 2031 GMT 18 Apr 91

[Text] Nouakchott, 18 Apr (AFP)—The EEC deputy director general, Mr. Philippe Soubestre, today in Nouakchott said "he was glad" about the onset of the democratic process in Mauritania.

The EEC official, who signed the national program with the Mauritanian authorities as part of Lome Four Convention involving 80.6 million European Currency Units, pointed out that the new democratic options and the signing of the program are a "happy coincidence."

Mr. Soubestre restated, however, that the community does not have to interfere in the choice of a democratic model "which is peculiar to each country and should depend on its sociocultural realities."

Mr. Soubestre described cooperation with Mauritania as "confident and geared toward the future" not only in line with the Lome Convention but also within the context of the Arab Maghreb Union. He rejected the arguments which claim that the EEC has turned back on its former partners in favor of Eastern Europe.

Mr. Soubestre was received in audience this morning by the Mauritanian head of state, Colonel Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya.

He said he discussed with him, like with other officials of the country, problems concerning EEC-Mauritania relations, notably regarding fishing and food aid.

In this regard, the EEC should grant food aid of about 18,000 tonnes of cereals to Mauritania this year to meet a deficit officially evaluated at 103,000 tonnes for 1990-91 fiscal year, 40 percent more than the 1989-90 deficit figures.

Opposition Groups Call for President's Resignation

AB2004143691 Paris AFP in English 1332 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Dakar, April 20 (AFP)—Two leading black Mauritanian opposition movements have called for a general amnesty and the resignation of the country's Moorish ruler, Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya. The Mauritanian Forces of African Liberation (FLAM) and the United Front for Armed Resistance in Mauritania (FURAM) said in a joint statement Saturday that without such moves there could be no genuine democracy.

President Ould Taya on Tuesday announced a referendum on a new constitution and the holding of general elections by the end of the year. But the black movements said in the statement received here in Senegal that the democratic process would be rigged unless the head of state stood down, an amnesty was declared for all former political prisoners, exiles were allowed to return and rehabilitated, and a national conference was held.

They also demanded the legalisation of political parties, while the national conference would draw up a new constitution and settle the problem of racial cohabitation between Mauritania's black Africans and the dominant Moors. They warned "other opposition movements against any attempt to collaborate with the regime of Colonel Ould Taya in its pseudo-democratic process," adding that they would join with any other Mauritanian organizations ready to accept their conditions.

Morocco

Nuclear Energy Agreement Signed With France

LD2004121791 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] In the framework of cultural, scientific, and technical cooperation between Morocco and France, an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation was signed today in the field of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes between the Ministry of Energy and Mines and the French commissariat for Nuclear Energy.

The agreement, the signing ceremony of which was attended by Energy and Mines Minister Moulay Driss Alaoui M'daghri and France's ambassador to Morocco, aims at developing scientific exchange between national bodies and institutions and the French Commissariat for Nuclear Energy in the field of the use of nuclear technology and aiding Morocco in achieving studies related to the national electro-nuclear program.

A special agreement on cooperation with the National Center for Energy and Nuclear Sciences and Technology and an agreement on nuclear cooperation with the Association of Engineers in the field of nuclear engineering in Morocco were signed on the occasion.

Saudi Crown Prince Arrives for Visit

LD2104132391 Riyadh SPA in English 1214 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Casablanca, April 21, SPA—Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the deputy premier and head of the National Guard arrived here last night on a private visit to Morocco.

He was greeted at the airport by Ahmad al-Adawe, the Moroccan minister of state; the Saudi ambassador to Morocco, 'Ali Majid al-Qabbani and a number of senior civil and military officials.

Sudan

Egyptian Paper Reports Foiled Coup Attempt

NC2004130891 Paris AFP in English 1131 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Cairo, April 20 (AFP)—Sudan's junta last week foiled a coup bid and executed 20 military officers at dawn last Tuesday, the Egyptian daily AL-WAFD reported here Saturday.

Sudanese Interior Minister Faysal 'Ali Abu-Salih and an unspecified number of other people have been arrested, the liberal opposition newspaper said, without naming its sources.

General Abu-Salih was sacked and put under house arrest for opposing the executions after a summary trial, the paper added.

On Monday, Sudanese state television had reported that Gen. Abu-Salih, a member of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) had been dismissed, with the head of the RCC's political commission, General 'Uthman Ahmad Hasan.

According to the Egyptian paper, the junta was currently undertaking a massive purge of the regular army, to the benefit of the people's militias recruited since the junta seized power in June 1989.

Egyptians well informed on Sudanese affairs said there had certainly been recent arrests, but were not able to confirm that the coup attempt or the executions had taken place.

In April last year, a day before the al-Fitr feast marking the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan, the junta executed 28 army officers after a summary trial for a coup attempt.

Coup Attempt Denied

JN2104191291 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1820 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Telephone interview with Sudanese Foreign Minister 'Ali Ahmad Sahlul in Khartoum by Suhayl Khuri in Amman on 21 April—recorded]

[Text] [Khuri] Foreign minister and acting culture and information minister: What is your comment on reports about a coup attempt in Sudan and execution of a number of officers?

[Sahlul] I would like to say that this is absolutely untrue. The source of this report is known for its hostile positions toward Sudan.

[Khuri] What is your comment on the report that Interior Minister Brigadier General Faysal 'Ali Abu-Salih has been arrested?

[Sahlul] No, he is not under arrest. He is in his house, as an ordinary citizen.

[Khuri] Mr. Minister, what do you think the aim of disseminating such news is?

[Sahlul] The source of the report has repeatedly published false information about Sudan with the intention of harming the government and revolution in the country.

[Khuri] We thank Mr. 'Ali Sahlul, Sudanese foreign minister and acting culture and information minister.

[Sahlul] Thank you very much.

Spokesman Denies Coup

NC2104164891 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1624 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Khartoum, 21 Apr (MENA)—An official Sudanese spokesman has denied reports carried by certain foreign newspapers and news agencies on a recent coup attempt in Sudan and the execution of a number of coupist officers.

In a statement to the SUDANESE NEWS AGENCY, the spokesman said the reports are baseless and part of a tendentious campaign being waged by certain quarters. The statement did not identify these quarters.

Al-Bashir Holds Talks With PLO's 'Arafat

EA2004214991 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1405 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Summary From Poor Reception] Khartoum, 20 April (SUNA)—The chairman of the Presidential Council and the Council of Ministers, Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, held talks lasting an hour and a half with the president of the state of Palestine, Yasir 'Arafat. The talks dealt with developments in the Arab and Palestinian arenas. This occurred this morning when the Palestinian president, Yasir 'Arafat, made a stop in Khartoum.

Mr. Yasir 'Arafat, the president of the state of Palestine, stressed that convening any conference on the Palestinian cause without UN supervision would mean that international legitimacy and the United Nations were not the bases for settling the Palestinian issue. They [not further identified] want to impose a reality on the Arab nation, especially with what they call the regional conference, which would be tantamount to a new Sykes-Picot agreement intended to impose the Americans' will. Mr. 'Arafat said that the Palestinian Mujahidin would continue the struggle until the Palestinian flag is raised in Jerusalem.

Army Kills 370 Rebels in Attack on Camp

EA2004140291 Omdurman Domestic Service in Arabic 0315 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] A responsible source at the general command said today that our Armed Forces in Bahr al-Ghazal state have attacked one of the outlaw's camps and completely destroyed it, killing 370 rebels. Among them was the camp's commander; a Captain (Murtal Wasim), a foreigner; and two other foreigners. A large number of the outlaws were injured and various weapons and equipment were seized: One 37-mm cannon, one 120-mm mortar, three artillery pieces, five G-3 rifles, one SAM-7, five (Ditriov) artillery pieces, five RPG-7's, five Type-46 rifles, two local rifles, one truck [words indistinct], two British-made typewriters, a complete set of office equipment, and communications and reconnaisance equipment. Four of our troops were slightly injured.

Opposition Radio Reports Arrests

EA2004182291 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] The National Islamic Front's military authorities are still carrying out continuous detention campaigns. This week they arrested a great number of 'Ummah Party members, including 'Abd al-Latif (al-Jinahadi), 'Umar Muhammad 'Umar, Husayn Salim, and Jawharah Sumah. Likewise, the imam of the al-Nubawi Mosque, Muhammad al-Mahdi, was arrested immediately after Friday prayers. He was later released after having been interrogated at al-Kobar prison.

Political Conference Preparations Complete

EA2004183391 Omdurman Domestic Service in Arabic 0315 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Excerpt] All preparations have been completed for convening the constituent conference on the political system from 29 April to 2 May. Representing all Sudan's states and all Sudanese sectors, both the Islamic and the factional, will be 1,500 participants. This is intended to enable the masses to participate fully and to hand over power to the people. Earlier, Colonel Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, RCC member and political conference rapporteur, had stated that the conference would discuss a general concept and the formulation of the system and the charter. He said that Sudan is presenting a good and outstanding example by organizing it. [passage omitted]

Tunisia

Ben Ali Adopts Resoluton on Agricultural Aid

LD2004130791 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 2300 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Regarding the continuing interests in agriculture and purusing its development, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali yesterday at noon in the Carthage presidential palace, presided over a mini-Cabinet session during which the means necessary for developing the agricultural production and improving the profitability of this sector were discussed to achieve food security in the basic substances.

In this context it has been decided to:

Adopt a pricing policy for basic substances, which takes into consideration the increase in production costs, which would secure a respectable income for the farmer, and to emphasize the freedom of prices for other agricultural products;

Revise the organization of professional societies in order to consolidate their role in modifying the supply and demand rule;

Continue the reform of distribution outlets in order to secure the producer's income on the one hand, and to preserve the level of prices for the consumer on the other hand;

Review the procedures of forming services cooperatives and companies in a way that would help their creation, and to give them the necessary concessions to provide all the necessary requirements of agricultural work for the small- and medium-size farmers in the spheres of agricultural work, supplies, and marketing. This is also in order to reduce the production costs and encourage the use of pesticides in order to increase the profitability of the agricultural sector. It has also been decided to end the procedures concerning custom duties currently imposed on these substances, and to abolish the prior licence required for benefiting from the concessions in this concern.

It has also been decided to encourage agricultural graduates to form special companies to provide various services to the farmers.

Karoui, Somali Prime Minister Discuss Ties

LD1904112791 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 2300 GMT 18 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Prime Minister Hamed Karoui held talks today at Government Palace, La Casbah, with Somali Prime Minister 'Umar Arteh Ghalib, who is on a visit to Tunisia. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahya.

After the meeting, 'Umar Arteh stated that he discussed with his Tunisian counterpart the means to deepen bilateral relations and the future exchange of expertise between the two countries in the political, economic, and social fields. Mr. Arteh decided that the talks also covered the current situation in Somalia and the Arab world. [passage omitted]

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Prime Minister Forms New Government

LD2104041091 London KUNA in Arabic 1723 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Kuwait, 20 Apr (KUNA)—His Highness Shaykh Sa'ad al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister, today formed the new Kuwaiti Government, comprising 20 ministers, 11 of whom are entering the cabinet for the first time. His Highness Amir al-Jabir al-Sabah authorized Shaykh Sa'ad al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah to form the new government after the previous Kuwaiti Government resigned on 20 March.

The following is the Kuwaiti Government, led by His Highness Shaykh Sa'ad al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah:

1. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah al-Salim
2. Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Dr. Ibrahim Majid al-Shahin
3. Interior Minister, Shaykh Ahmad Hamud al-Jabir
4. Planning Minister, Dr. Ahmad 'Ali al-Jassar
5. Electricity and Water Minister, Ahmad Muhammad Salih al-'Adasani
6. Information Minister, Badr Jasim al-Ya'qub
7. Communications Minister, Habib Hasan Jawhar Hayat
8. Petroleum Minister, Dr. Hamud 'Abdallah al-Ruqba
9. Education Minister, Sulayman Sa'dun al-Badr
10. Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Dhari 'Abdallah al-'Uthman
11. Commerce and Industry Minister, 'Abdallah Hasan al-Jarallah
12. Public Works Minister, 'Abdallah Yusuf al-Qutami
13. Health Minister, Dr. 'Abd-al-Wahab al-Fawzan
14. Defense Minister, Shaykh 'Ali Sabah al-Salim
15. Higher Education Minister, Dr. 'Ali 'Abdallah al-Shamlan
16. Justice and Legal Affairs Minister, Ghari 'Ubayd al-Sammar
17. Waqf and Islamic Affairs Minister, Muhammad Saqar al-Ma'usharji
18. Minister of State for Housing, Muhammad 'Abd-al-Muhsin al-Usfur
19. Finance Minister, Nasir 'Abdallah al-Ridan
20. Social Affairs and Labor Minister, Shaykh Nawwaf al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah

Cabinet Sworn In

LD2104142391 (Clandestine) Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1300 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, has urged members of the new government to double their efforts and do all they can to achieve everything possible in the shortest possible time, because of the difficult circumstances.

The amir today received Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister, and the members of the new government. They were sworn in before him. The amir addressed them and stressed some of the issues of special priority. At the forefront of these issues is returning to God Almighty in all aspects and fields of life, taking the lead from the tolerant Islamic Shari'ah.

The amir asked the new government to hasten the implementation of the contents of his address to the citizens in the last ten days of blessed Ramadan, especially concerning the families of the martyrs; supervising the affairs of prisoners of war and those missing, and conducting the necessary contacts with all local and international concerned authorities to secure the safety of the prisoners and missing and their return to their homeland and families. On this concern, the amir authorized the new government to study the formation of a national committee, in which concerned authorities and citizens could participate, which would be dedicated to administer this issue.

The amir asked for hastening the special 'Id al-Fitr payment allocated by his highness for the families of the martyrs.

His highness also talked about the issue of security and its importance as a basis for rebuilding the homeland and for the stability, comfort, and security of the citizens.

The amir asked the government to look carefully—according to available resources—into possible means for easing the suffering of the citizens caused by the robbery and destruction of their houses. He also asked for considering the construction, production, and professional sectors, and giving them support in order to restore life to normality as soon as possible.

The amir stressed the necessity of restoring the civil service in the various state departments to its activities and vitality, according to the requirements of work, so that it could carry out its natural role in managing the affairs of the citizens and providing them with services. In this field the Kuwaitis should be relied upon to shoulder their duties and responsibilities in rebuilding and advancing the homeland.

In concluding his address, the amir and leader expressed his wishes of success for the new government in serving the homeland and citizens.

Amir Contacted

LD2004225591 London KUNA in Arabic 2015 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Kuwait, 20 Apr (KUNA)—This evening His Highness Shaykh Sa'ad al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister, addressed a letter to His Highness Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah on the occasion of forming the new government.

His Highness emphasized: "As the formation of the new government is completed, the dear homeland passes

through a critical historic watershed after the defeat of the unjust invader who left destruction and ruin of the basic infrastructure of the state in addition to the deep wounds he inflicted on all our hearts."

In his letter, Shaykh al-Sabah said: "The Iraqi regime has committed appalling atrocities of murder, detention, and dispersion against the Kuwaiti people."

The heir apparent and prime minister pointed out that Kuwait still suffers from the incalculable destructive effects of that vanquished occupation. These effects have gone beyond the breakdown of public services to hit the key Kuwaiti family and its sons—some are now martyrs and others are prisoners of war still going through the cruelty of detention.

His Highness pointed out that, if the new government was going to undertake the operations of reconstruction and management of public services effectively and the preparation for general elections, which will take place next year, to choose the members of the new national assembly, it would give the majority of its attention to the issue of the Kuwaiti prisoners of war in Iraq and also to the families of the Kuwaiti martyrs.

Shaykh al-Sabah said that the burden of responsibility during this critical period of the country's history is heavy. He expressed his appreciation of the ministers for taking the ministerial posts because of their unhesitant enthusiasm to serve the homeland and preserve its security, unity and cohesion and because of their pursuit of solving the problems of the homeland and fulfilling its aspirations.

Government Hailed

LD2104141391 (Clandestine) Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Station commentary]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Gentlemen, peace be upon you, and God's prayers and blessings. The government that was formed yesterday led by His Highness Shaykh Sa'ad al-'Adballah al-Salim al- Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister, is the 14th government in 29 years since the independence of our dear country. This government, however, does not represent a mere one among a series of governments in the life of Kuwait. On the contrary, it is a historic government in every sense of the word. It has similar political and historic significance to that of the first government formed following independence.

The formation of the independence government represented a starting point for the modern state of Kuwait and the establishment of its constitutional institutions in 1962, during the rule of the last Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Salim, who was able, thanks to his bravery, to crown the struggle of Kuwait generations and achieve national independece for the fledgeling state of Kuwait.

The words uttered by this leader are still being echoed throughout the homeland, the land of beloved Kuwait, when he announced the good news of independence during his historic speech delivered to the Kuwaiti people. During this memorable day among the days of our dear homeland, during this day we embark upon another historic phase, during whose dawn we turn back all aspects and features of another leaf from the past to start a new page. The historic words uttered by the late Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Salim laid down a message for consecutive Kwuaiti generations to go ahead with action and protect our independence, together with a precious legacy for continued cohesion between the leadership and the people, to translate this independence into construction, development, and progress.

After 29 years in the life of the national march, Kuwait, under the leadership of the father-leader, the Amir of the country Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, finds itself facing the same historic moment of the past. During these circumstances, the political leadership recalls the message of the leader of the independence: The homeland has just gone through a crucial phase of struggle against a sinful invasion, which has written the bleakest pages in Arab and Islamic history, and even in the history of mankind. The homeland is embarking on a great epic manifested in the reconstruction of the country following its liberation, as was the case following its independence.

The legacy of the late Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah—God's mercy be upon him—has been truly and sincerely translated these days and during the past days through clear cohesion between the leadership and the people in their struggle against the invaders. This struggle did not abate for one single moment in all sectors during seven bleak months.

In implementation of this historic legacy, the formation of the new government represents the first step along the road of reconstruction whose burden the Kuwaiti leadership and people are committed to shoulder, as was stated during the popular conference convened last October in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under the patronage of the father-leader, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, and at the invitation of His Highness Shaykh Sa'ad al'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister. During this conference, all walks of life, sectors, official and popular classes, and national institutions representing the people of Kuwait met to stress one single word that expresses the unity of the rank, expresses the cohesion existing between the leadership and the people, and expresses optimism for a brighter future. [passage omitted]

Yes, your highness, the Kuwait of the future, the efforts of its sons, the solidarity of its sons, and this great cohesion between the leadership and the people will press ahead with work toward achieving a brighter future. God's peace and prayers be upon you.

Aid to Pro-Iraq Arab States To Be Cut

NC1804152991 Paris AFP in English 1214 GMT 18 Apr 91

[Text] Dubayy, United Arab Emirates, April 18 (AFP)—Kuwait, a major aid donor to Third World nations, will halt assistance to Arab states which sided with Iraq during the Gulf crisis, a regional newspaper reported Thursday.

The Dubayy-based AL-BAYAN quoted Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Sulayman Al-Shahin as saying his country would cut foreign aid to less than its current level of nine per cent of the annual budget.

"The countries which supported Iraq will be outside the list of states which will receive Kuwaiti aid," he said.

He did not name those countries but Kuwait and its allies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have accused Jordan, Sudan, Yemen and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) of sympathising with Iraq's August 2 invasion of the emirate.

The four countries had relied heavily on GCC aid, receiving more than 20 per cent of the 76 billion dollars extended by Gulf states in development aid in the years 1975-1988.

Jordan has warned it could face disaster due to its economic problems unless it receives assistance, while impoverished Sudan and Yemen have reported big losses from the Gulf war.

The PLO, which has depended almost entirely on Gulf cash, has suffered the most. An unannounced freeze of Gulf aid has forced it to cut wages by more than 50 per cent since August.

The GCC states of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to set up a fund to help poor Arab states with an eventual capital of 15 billion dollars.

Official Gulf sources told Agence France-Presse that pro-Iraq states would initially not benefit from the fund, while Egypt and Syria, the staunchest Arab supporters, would be the biggest aid recepients.

Mr. Shahin said the foreign aid cut, which he did not enumerate, was prompted by commitments to post-war reconstruction, estimated to cost tens of billions of dollars.

"Reconstruction will top the priorities of the new Kuwaiti Government," he was quoted as saying.

He said Kuwait had recalled its ambassadors to pro-Iraq Arab countries and would cut staff at its embassies there.

"Diplomatic relations with these countries will not be like before unless these governments prove their good intentions towards Kuwaiti legitimacy or if their regimes are changed," he said.

"As for Iraq, there will be no diplomatic exchange until the regime there is changed and good intentions are proved," he added.

Minister Comments on Palestinians, Returnees

LD2004095291 London KUNA in Arabic 1615 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Washington, 19 Apr (KUNA)—In a television interview given here today, Kuwaiti Planning Minister Sulayman al-Mutaww'a replied to reports about the ill-treatment of some non-Kuwaitis by saying that the Kuwaiti Government had taken all measures against those who misuse their power in Kuwait, be they civilians or the military working for the Interior Ministry. In an interview with CBS he said. "I would like to comment on the reports about ill-treatment in Kuwait by saying that in the very early days of the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi invasion and prior to the return of the Government to Kuwait, there were some people who somewhat wrongly applied the law in their own way—with enthusiasm, emotion, and extreme reaction against Palestinians who were brought to Kuwait by the Iraqi authorities and who had misbehaved."

In reply to a quesiton by a CBS broadcaster on why there was not enough of a Kuwaiti workforce involved in Kuwait's reconstruction, al-Mutaww'a said. "I would like to point out that the Kuwaitis were the largest minority in their homeland, as they numbered 600,000 people out of a total of 2.2 million who were living in Kuwait, and that is why we do not see them everywhere."

He added that the tragic conditions endured by the Kuwaiti people during the occupation, including the killing, torture, and rapes perpetrated by the Iraqi authorities, "created a kind of resentment in the hearts of Kuwaitis."

He went on to say that the conditions under occupation also contributed to drive large numbers of Kuwaitis away from their homeland.

Al-Mutaww'a also indicated that the Kuwaiti people abroad will start returning to their homeland, averaging 10,000 people daily, starting 4 May. He expected the operation to continue until mid-September.

Saudi Arabia

King Fahd Comments on Talks With Baker

LD2204001291 Riyadh Domestic Service in Arabic 2230 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] At his office in al-Salam Palace 21 April King Fahd Bin- 'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, received U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and the accompanying delegation. The meeting

was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, foreign minister; 'Abd-al-Rahman Mansuri, Foreign Ministry undersecretary for political affairs, and U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom Charles Freeman.

In answer to a journalist's question on peace efforts in the area the custodian of the two holy mosques said that first he hopes that his dear friend the U.S. secretary of state has been successful in his journey to the Middle East states. There is no doubt that according to what we have heard and what has been reported by news agencies, he made the greatest possible effort to achieve peace. All I want is for peace to be realized in this area. (?But I would say) that we must not overtake events.

I also reiterate my many thanks to President Bush for the statements he has made concerning the problem that has long existed and still exists between the Arabs and Israel. We all hope that peace comes to this (?area).

Press Views Baker Peace Efforts in Middle East

LD2004223391 Riyadh SPA in English 1216 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Riyadh, April 20, SPA—Saudi daily papers today cast doubts on any positive outcome of Mr Baker's recent talks in Tel Aviv with the Israeli leaders on peace process in the Middle East.

AL-MADINAH AL-MANAWAH, published in Jeddah, attributed the wide spread pessimism to the hardline position of the Israeli leaders and their unacceptable conditions despite their pressing need for peace.

The paper said the Israeli hardliners are lacking trust in any peace initiative whether offered by the Arab or by the American parties.

AL-MADINAH made the point that the establishment of comprehensive peace in the Middle East is no longer an Arab or an Israeli demand but it has increasingly become an international demand.

'UKAZ also published in Jeddah, said the world should not miss the golden opportunity and the international community should press for the reinstation of the international legitimacy and deal with the Middle East conflict prefectly and firmly.

The paper expressed hope that the shuttle diplomacy of Mr James Baker would not have the same fate of that of the former U.S. secretary of state, Mr Kissinger in early 1970s.

AL-BILAD of Jeddah also cited the unprecedented chance made for the establishment of an acceptable settlement for the Arab/Israeli conflict and called the international community to utilize the current positive signs witnessed by the international arena in the recent decade.

The Riyadh based AL-JAZIRAH also commented on the same topic and lauded the U.S. determination this time to make a remarkable progress on the peace process in the Middle East and said the serious American steps would give more hope for the international community to settle the prolonged conflict.

The paper also cited the international unanimity shown during the recent Arab Gulf crisis prompted by the Iraqi vicious occupation of Kuwait and said this reflects a sincere desire to dedicate the march of international detente, peace and reconciliation.

Prince Khalid, Schwarzkopf Awarded Decorations

LD2104151191 Riyadh SPA in English 1236 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Excerpts] Riyadh, April 21, SPA—As per directives of custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the supreme commander of the Armed Forces, Lieut. Gen. Prince Khalid Bin-Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-Aziz, commander of the joint forces, awarded the King 'Abd-al-'Aziz Order, Premier Class to Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the U.S. Central Forces in the Arab Gulf region in recognition to efforts he made during the military operation that led to the liberation of Kuwait. He is the first non-Saudi commander to get the order.

On the other hand and on on behalf of the U.S. President, George Bush, Gen. Schwarzkopf awarded Lieut. Gen. Prince Khalid Ibn-Sultan the Medal of Merit, Commander's Grade, during a special ceremony held on Saturday at the headquarters of the Ministry of Defense here.

Lieut. Gen. Prince Khalid, in a speech on the occasion, highlighted the excellent performance of Gen. Schwarzkopf during the operations and thanked President Bush and the U.S.A. for the great efforts exerted for the liberation of Kuwait.

Lieut. Gen. Prince Khalid said custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd, President Bush and the United Nations had played the pioneer role in repulsion of outrageous Iraqi aggression. He highlighted the great and historical victory realized by the coalition forces and expressed satisfaction over the unique coordination and cooperation shown by the commanders of the allied forces during the Operation Desert Storm.

Prince Khalid said the liberation of Kuwait would deter any similar aggression in future and added that the event has opened the door for peaceful settlements through negotiations and cooperation.

The commander of the joint forces expressed deep personal respect for Gen. Schwarzkopf and described him as a friend. [passage omitted]

Addressing a joint press conference afterwards, Prince Khalid expressed confidence that the forces of Saddam Husayn have no longer the capability of attacking Saudi Arabia or Kuwait despite the fact that he does not trust Saddam Husayn while in power.

He said the Saudi Armed Forces had been assigned to execute certain task and they had successfully implemented the tasks.

Prince Khalid expressed pride that the State of Kuwait has been liberated with the least possible casualties and loss.

Referring to the Kingdom's humanitarian efforts to take care of innocent refugees suppressed by the regime of Saddam Husayn, Lieut. Gen. Prince Khalid said the Kingdom has opened a refugees camp and work is underway to expand the camp to accomodate the largest possible number of refugees.

Meanwhile, Schwarzkopf expressed pride over the brilliant victory realised by the coalition forces and said the events showed that despite cultural and political divisions, the entire international community has shown determination to deter atrocities and aggressions in the entire world.

He lauded the efforts being made by the Kingdom to accomodate the Iraqi refugees.

Yemen

PLO's 'Arafat Arrives, Makes Statement

EA2004220191 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Today the militant brother Yasir 'Aarafat, president of the state of Palestine, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, and commander in chief of the Palestine revolution forces, arrived in Sanaa to visit our country for several days. During the visit he will meet brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council.

Brother Yasir 'Arafat made a press statement to the Yemeni News Agency, SABA' in which he pointed out that his visit comes as the Arab nation is passing through difficult, important, and fateful circumstances. He said that he would exchange views with his brothers in the Yemeni leadership to adopt a collective Arab stand to face up to the fateful developments affecting the Arab nation in general and the Palestinian cause in particular, especially in the face of the successive moves of the U.S. Administration to convene a regional meeting far from the specifications [as heard] to which we were aspiring, including a speedy and honorable resolution of the Palestinian issue and above all the cause of Jerusalem, the first qiblah and the third holy place.

On arrival at Sanaa international airport he was received by Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Dali, the minister of state for foreign affairs; a representative of the Presidential Council Protocol Department, and brother Yahya Rabbah, ambassador of the state of Palestine in Sanaa, as well as members of the embassy.

Meets With Salih

JN2104060291 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 0430 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council, received brother Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, in his office yesterday. The two discussed developments in the Palestinian cause and international efforts in this respect, and the latest Arab and international developments. They also discussed the contacts and consultations under way to restore Arab solidarity and unity to confront the challenges that our Arab nation faces at the present stage.

The brother chairman of the Presidential Council reiterated the solidarity of the Yemeni command, government, and people with the Palestinian Arab people under the PLO, the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative.

Views U.S. Efforts

JN2104130991 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Brother struggler Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, left Sanaa at dawn today following a brief visit to our country during which he met with brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, Presidential Council chairman. 'Arafat discussed with Salih the developments in the region, particularly those related to the Palestine question.

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY—SABA', 'Arafat said he briefed the brother president on the steps which the U.S. Administration is trying to make [words indistinct] resolve the Palestine question. He said: The U.S. Administration [words indistinct] standards on international legitimacy are different from those which it applied in the Gulf.

The president of the state of Palestine referred to the serious situation in the city of Jerusalem, which is being exposed to further Israeli threats [words indistinct] the setting up of more settlements [words indistinct]. He stressed that those [words indistinct] constitute a threat not only to the Palestinian people and land alone, but also to the (?entire) Arab nation.

Brother Yasir 'Arafat added that he discussed with the brother Presidential Council chairman the other U.S. attempt, through which the U.S. Administration is trying to evade the application of international legitimacy, particularly the national inalienable rights which the United Nations has acknowledged for the Palestinian people, including their right to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of their independent state on their soil, with Jerusalem as its capital.

He said: [words indistinct] 'Arafat praised the firm, brotherly stand taken by Yemen—president, government, and people—in support of the Palestinian people who are being exposed to [words indistinct]. He stressed that the intifadah will continue wave after wave until the Palestinian flag is hoisted over Jerusalem's walls, God willing. [passage omitted]

National Assembly Meets, Elects Committee Members

JN2004183491 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1810 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 20 Apr (INA)—The National Assembly today held a session under Speaker Sa'di Mahdi Salih within the framework of its spring term this year. The assembly elected new members to its permanent committees for the next two years in accordance with Article No. 40 of the assembly's by-laws.

The assembly members have unanimously approved the reduction of the eight permanent committee members from 15 to nine members.

The assembly includes eight permanent committees for legal and administrative affairs; cultural, media, educational, and youth affairs; financial and planning affairs; Arab and international relations; agricultural and trade; public services and citizens; and energy, industry, and mineral affairs; in addition to the awqaf and religious, social, and health affairs committee.

UN Envoy Protests Iranian Cease-Fire 'Violations'

Memorandum Detailed

JN2004193291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1828 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] New York, 20 Apr (INA)—Iraq's permanent representative to the United Nations submitted another letter to the UN secretary general today containing incidents of new Iranian violations of the cease-fire agreement between Iraq and Iran. The memorandum says:

1. On 10 April 1991 at 0300, three Iranian groups infiltrated Iraqi territory from three directions: The coastal road of the small Shatt al-'Arab River, 'Atabah road, and Shalamcheh. With the support of 107-mm launchers, the group managed to gain a foothold. After clashing with Iraqi forces, the position was recovered and eight Iranian infiltrators were killed.

2. On 10 April 1991, from 0920 to 1120, the Iranian side shelled the southern Iraqi Majnun area with heavy artillery.

3. On 13 April 1991 at 0430, a civilian pickup truck carrying four people was seen coming from Iranian territory on the Shalamcheh road and stopped inside Iraqi territory. At 0445 on the same day, the vehicle returned with its occupants to Iranian territory. At 0900 on the same day, two Iranian armored personnel carriers and one Land Rover were seen coming from the Shalamcheh area on the Du'ayji road, stopped inside Iraqi territory, and approximately 12 soldiers and civilians got out of the vehicle. At 1115 on the same day, the two armored personnel carriers and the vehicle returned to the Iranian territory.

4. On 15 April 1991 at 0435, a group infiltrated from inside Iranian territory into Iraqi territory and opened fire from their light weapons in the direction of Iraqi Army locations near the Iraqi border post of Musa al-Kazim in the central sector. This lead to the injury of five of our soldiers.

5. These violations confirm once again the Iranian Government's insistence on violating the laws of the cease-fire agreement between the two countries, and its deliberate attempts to harm the security and sovereignty of Iraq. The government of my country affirms once again the responsibility of the Iranian Government for all the damage caused to Iraq by these violations.

Iraq's representative also has asked that this letter be circulated as an official Security Council document.

INA on Complaint

JN2204145391 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1358 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] New York, 22 Apr (INA)—Iran continues to violate the cease-fire agreement with Iraq, having made seven incursions into Iraqi territory between 1 and 17 April.

Iraq's permanent UN representative noted in two memos sent today to the secretary general of the world body Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar that a unit that had come from well inside Iran on 1 April fired RPG-7 rockets from Jazirat Tawilah [name as received] area at Iraqi units in the southern sector. On 3 April another force shelled Iraqi units in the southern sector using 82-mm mortar guns and medium launchers and weapons.

Iraq's representative added that on 16 April three groups coming from the Iranian side attacked positions of the Iraqi units in the al-Harithah-al-Basrah with light weapons. They included a vehicle carrying a 107-mm launcher. On the same day, the Iranian side hit Iraqi units stationed in the said area with five mortar shells.

Iraq's permanent UN representative also explained that on 16 April, an Iranian force made up of approximately 20-30 people attacked Iraqi units in al-Harithah-al-Basrah area. The next day, 17 April, the Iranian side also sent to the same area seven Land Cruisers, each of which carrying 20 people, along with some clergymen. The Iraqi UN representative added that on the same day, these groups penetrated into Iraqi territory for a distance of 400 meters, walking on both sides of the main road.

The two memos stressed that these violations assert afresh the Iranian Government's insistence on violating the cease-fire provisions between the two countries and its deliberate attempts to infringe on Iraq's sovereignty and security.

The two memos held the Iranian Government responsible for any harm these violations cause to Iraqi territory.

Further 'Violations' Detailed

JN2104085991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0800 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] New York, 21 Apr (INA)—Iraq's permanent envoy to the United Nations has addressed a letter to the UN secretary general on new cases of Iranian violations. The letter included the following:

At 0630 on 18 April 1991, the Iranian side shelled Fayjalah with 107-mm caliber launchers from Iranian territory at Qasr-e Shirin. The number of rockets that fell was 12.

The letter added that this violation, to be added to previous Iranian violations, reaffirms the Iranian Government's determination to violate the cease-fire between the two countries and its intentional attempts to harm Iraq's sovereignty and security. The Iraqi Government reasserts that the Iranian Government is responsible for all the damage caused to Iraq by these violations.

Iraq's permanent envoy has asked that the letter be distributed as an official Security Council document.

Envoy Sends Memos to UN on U.S. Air Activity

16-18 Apr Activity

JN2104095091 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2103 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] New York, 20 Apr (INA)—Iraq's permanent UN representative has sent a memorandum to the UN secretary general on American flights during the period 16-18 April 1991, requesting that it be circulated as a Security Council document. The memorandum reads:
1. On 16 April 1991:
A. U.S. air activity in Iraq's airspace came to 72 sorties in 35 formations, and two individual sorties.
B. The aircraft flew at altitudes ranging between 5 and 7 km, and at speeds of 600-720 km per hour.
C. The aircraft were identified as F-14's and F-15's.
D. The aircraft flew mainly over Baghdad, Karkuk, al-Kut, al-Ramadi, and Karbala', engaging in reconnaissance and harassment.
2. On 17 April 1991:
A. U.S. air activity in Iraq's airspace came to 67 sorties in 33 formations.
B. The aircraft flew at altitudes ranging between 5 and 8 km and at speeds reaching 750 km per hour.
C. The aircraft were identified as F-14's and F-15's.
D. The aircraft flew mainly over Baghdad, al-Kut, al-Hashimiyah, al-Ramadi, and al-Samawah, engaging in reconnaissance, observation, and harassment.
3. On 18 April 1991:
A. U.S. air activity in Iraq's airspace came to 80 sorties in 38 formations.
B. The aircraft flew at altitudes ranging between 4 and 8 km and at speeds reaching 750 km per hour.
C. The aircraft were identified as F-14's and F-15's.
D. The aircraft flew mainly over Baghdad, al-Suwayrah, al-Hashimiyah, al-Samawah, and north of al-Razazah, engaging in reconnaissance, observation, and harassment.

19 Apr Activity

JN2104091891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0810 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] New York, 21 Apr (INA)—Iraq's permanent UN representative has sent a memorandum to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar and the UN Security Council president on the continued violation of Iraq's airspace by U.S. and Saudi aircraft.

The INA correspondent in New York reports that the Iraqi representative asked that the memorandum be circulated as one of the UN Security Council's official documents.

The memorandum says that the number of sorties by U.S. and Saudi aircraft for 19 April came to 92 sorties carried out by 46 formations at altitudes ranging from 4 to 8 km and at speeds between 800 and 1,000 km per hour.

The memorandum explains that the aircraft were identified as F-14's and F-15's and that they overflew Baghdad, Diyala, al-Suwayrah, al-Kut, Karbala', Takrit, and al-Razazah with the aim of observation and harassment.

The memorandum also says that at 1405 on 19 April 1991 a formation of two U.S. aircraft violated Iranian [as received] airspace over the area extending 50 km from Mandali to Qasr-e Shirin at an altitude of 7 km and at a speed of 120 km per hour, while ranging between 2 and 10 km inside of Iranian territory.

20-21 Apr Activity

JN2204125591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1225 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] New York, 22 Apr (INA)—U.S. aircraft violated Iraqi airspace again on 20-21 [April]. Its air activity amounted to 154 sorties by 76 formations at speeds of 600 to 850 km per hour and at altitudes between 4.5 to 9 km.

This was disclosed today by Iraq's permanent representative to the United Nations in a memo he addressed to the world organization's secretary general. He said that U.S. and Saudi flights were concentrated over the areas of Baghdad, al-'Aziziyah, al-Hashimiyah, Karbala', al-Kut, al-'Amarah, and al-Nasiriyah. He added that the aircraft were of the F-15 and F-16 type.

Iraq's representative said the aircraft were engaged in reconnaissance, observation, and provocation by flying over populated areas at 1245 [as received] inside Iraqi airspace and over south Baghdad.

INA's correspondent in New York said Iraq's representative has requested that the memo be distributed as an official UN Security Council document.

Peace Organization on Rebels, Resolution 688

JN2004190191 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1628 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 20 Apr (INA)—The Friendship, Peace, and Solidarity Organization in Iraq has called on all peace-loving forces in the world to expose the intentional actions against Iraq and the unjust methods that are being used by the aggressor parties such as UN Security Council Resolution 688, which harms Iraq's territorial integrity.

In a statement it issued in Baghdad today, the organization said the acts of sabotage, killings, and violations of honor that took place in southern and northern Iraq violate all humanitarian values and are in conflict with the Iraqi citizen's personal freedom. These actions also cannot be viewed as part of the freedom of expression which should be expressed through political means and within the acknowledged democratic channels.

The statement said that gangs of saboteurs came from across the borders to kill citizens and destroy their properties and the state's departments which deal with humanitarian issues and services.

The statement went on to say that many imperialist quarters have encouraged these actions and tried to cover up the reality of what they committed against innocent and defenseless citizens. At the same time, the rebels, using threats and pressure, forced the citizens in the northern areas to leave their homes and head for the Iraqi borders, or cross these borders.

The statement added that statements by the men and women who have returned confirm the deception and falsehoods to which the gangs of saboteurs have resorted to fragment Iraq's unity and implement the Zionist conspiracies.

RCC Pardons 'all Iraqis' Involved in Riots

JN2004192091 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1815 GMT 20 Apr 91

["Text" of Revolution Command Council Decree No. 109 issued on 20 April]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Revolution Command Council [RCC] Decree No. 109, dated 5 Shawwal, 1411 Hegira, corresponding to 20 April 1991:

Now that God Almighty has enabled us to repulse the forces of evil which Iran had used and which were also backed by the imperialist forces and some of the quarters and countries which surround us, and on which imperialism depended in its scheme of aggression against Iraq; after the collapse of these unjust forces which wrought havoc and killed the good sons of Iraq and Iraq's militant vanguards; because it has been ascertained to us that some of those who fell in the trap of the criminal scheme, but who did not become involved in the crime, did so under the influence of deception; and because God Almighty has advised his good followers to pardon when possible as he said in his holy book: And the remission is the nearest to righteousness." [Koranic verse]

From this premise, and in accordance with the provisions of paragraph A of Article 42 of the Constitution, the RCC decides the following:

1. All Iraqis, whether in northern, southern, or central Iraq, will be included in the general and comprehensive pardon stipulated in RCC Decree No. 103 dated 10 April 1991. They will be pardoned from any legal effect or legal proceedings resulting from any action punishable by law which took place during the circumstances of the events of rioting and treason. The crimes of premeditated murder, violation of honor, and theft are exempted from this.

2. All the state and Armed Forces departments shall provide the facilities needed to implement this decree.

This decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall be enforced from the date of its issuance.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn, RCC chairman

Baghdad on Kuwaiti Cabinet, Opposition Response

JN2104113091 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1048 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] The formation of a new 20-man cabinet was announced in Kuwait last night replacing the one that resigned 20 March. The new cabinet, which is headed by Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah, includes four members of the ruling al-Sabah family; namely, Salim al-Sabah al-Salim, who was appointed deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Ahmad Humud al-Jabir, who was appointed interior minister; 'Ali Sabah al-Salim, appointed defense minister; and Nawwaf al-Ahmad al-Jabir, social affairs minister. Four members of the ruling family were excluded from the new cabinet. They are Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, who served as deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Jabir al-'Abdallah al-Jabir, who served as social affairs minister; Nasir Muhammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah, who served as minister of state for social affairs; and 'Ali Khalifah al-'Adhbi al-Sabah who served as finance minister.

Kuwaiti opposition quarters said that the failure of the Kuwaiti amir to announce an early date for legislative elections prevented many figures from accepting ministerial portfolios in the new cabinet. The opposition threatened that all those who accept ministerial posts in the new cabinet will face difficulties. AFP says: As a matter of fact, none of the opposition figures was named to the new cabinet.

Immediately after the new cabinet was announced, Kuwaiti opposition quarters criticized the appointment of former Interior Minister Salim al-Sabah al-Salim as foreign minister and that of former Defense Minister Nawwaf al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah as minister of social affairs. Democratic Forum member Muhammad Qadiri said that the new cabinet is a humiliation to the Kuwaiti people. He added that these ministers represent nothing. He went on to say that their ambitions, ideas, and reconstruction plans have nothing to do with the desires of the people. They are all opposed to democracy and to democratic life, he concluded.

The opposition sources said that they will issue a statement later to explain the opposition's stand on the new cabinet.

200 'Policemen' Reportedly Enter Zakho

JN2104151991 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1504 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Two hundred Iraqi policemen today entered the city of Zakho in northern Iraq. The U.S. Army condemned this Iraqi action and considered it a violation of the agreement reached between the two sides.

In the meantime, a U.S. source in Turkey said the Iraqi Army had begun leaving Zakho.

Pilots of Aircraft in Iran Said Seeking Asylum

JN2104165191 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1530 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Beirut, 21 Apr (SANA)—The Lebanese magazine AL-KIFAH AL-'ARABI has said that the more than 40 Iraqi pilots who flew their aircraft to Iranian bases to protect them from coalition air attacks have requested political asylum in Iran.

The magazine cites Arab sources as saying that this is confirmed information, and referred to other reports which confirm that the number of pilots who have sought political asylum exceeds 70.

Trade Minister Views Iraq's Losses, Trade Ties

JN2104060991 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 20 Apr 91 p 7

[Interview with Iraqi Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih by Sa'd al-Silawi in Baghdad; date not given]

[Text] [Al-Silawi] What is your list of priorities regarding trade after the lifting of the economic blockade against Iraq? Will trade exchange with world nations be linked to the political positions adopted by these nations during the war?

[Salih] Concerning the first part of the question, priority will be given to the basics affected by the destruction caused by the U.S. forces and their allies and completed by the saboteurs and demagogues during the sectarian and ethnic sedition. Priority will be given to medicine, food, and material needed to operate water treatment facilities, electricity generators, and oil refineries. These were the main targets of the all-out destruction, and they are essential for citizens to receive sufficient services and basic needs. Within the current supply system, food does not meet the true needs of citizens. Through suppliers, the world knows how much we used to consume before the blockade. There is between a 40 and 50 percent decrease in the supply system; that is, the Iraqi citizen is receiving only half what he used to consume during the blockade. We are now concentrating on importing foodstuffs to increase rations as a first step, and to compensate for the shortage of the strategic reserves caused by the saboteurs, who completely destroyed the reserves of 13 governorates.

[Al-Silawi] How much damage did the saboteurs cause?

[Salih] The losses are huge, and the competent authorities are now drawing up estimates. For example, the central markets were completely burned; its contents were looted and the records destroyed. Supply warehouses were all burned and looted; means of transportation, computers, and equipment were destroyed. Documents from the Trade Ministry and from all state departments are missing in the 13 governorates where sabotage took place, and also in the Khanaqin region of Diyala Governorate.

The problem now is that when students in those governorates returned to their schools, they found no records and no registration documents. All other records, whether concerning ownership of real estate, factories, lands, or others are all missing; there is no documentation to prove who owns what. Moreover, all records about marriage, divorce, inheritance, and possessions of the underaged and orphans were also destroyed. Records about pensions and salaries were also missing. The acts of sabotage and destruction therefore complemented the grave conspiracy against Iraq and the strategic U.S. and Zionist objectives. The demagogues finished off what the Americans failed to destroy.

[Al-Silawi] Can you give us a percentage reflecting the losses sustained by the Iraqi economy as a result of the aggression launched by 30 countries and the acts of sabotage carried out by rebels and saboteurs?

[Salih] In general terms, one can say that our annual revenues for this year, estimated at approximately $20 billion, have been finished off. That is because the economic embargo is preventing us from exporting oil. This reflects the first direct losses sustained as a result of the economic blockade. The revenues which totaled $20 billion per year in the past are no longer existent in light of the economic blockade. One more thing—oil, industrial, and communications installations have been destroyed. Likewise, roads and bridges have not been spared, because they were viewed as a major part of the infrastructure. Sixty-one bridges have been destroyed. As for communication networks and centers, they have

been destroyed. All the installations on which Iraq spent hundreds of billions of dollars, and which were built at low cost in the seventies, were destroyed. Many times the money spent on building these installations will need to be spent to rebuild them. The competent authorities will estimate the cost of reconstruction at a later stage. Iraq's industrial base, hospitals, and health centers were destroyed. The acts of destruction were carried out in accordance with a brutal plan. The aircraft used missiles to bombard and destroy these installations and to kill the civilians working in them. Anyhow, initial estimations put the losses sustained at more than $200 billion.

[Al-Silawi] In view of this, do you think that the blockade will continue to be enforced for a long time? Moreover, what is your comment on the recent UN Security Council [UNSC] resolution?

[Salih] The UNSC resolution shows every Arab and every man in the world how bestial the policy pursued against the Iraqi people has been. They enforced the blockade resolution on 2 August after the proclamation of the merger unity with Kuwait. This status has ended right now, since Iraq withdrew from Kuwait and signed a cease-fire agreement. Nevertheless, the blockade continued to be enforced. The lifting of the blockade has been made contingent on objectives that not only seek to destroy Iraq, but the Arab nation's potential and capabilities as well. That is because the conflict is one between the Zionists and Americans on the one hand and the Arabs on the other. They used the Kuwait issue as an excuse to kill off all that is positive within Iraq and the Arab nation, and all that is powerful and which poses a threat to them. They were aware that Iraq was a big international force, not a merely regional power. They were also aware that Iraq had been pursuing an independent policy since the inception of the revolution. This is what has continued to frighten them up to this day.

When their conspiracy, which took the form of a rebellion, failed, the conspiracy went outside our borders. They used what is called the issue of Kurdish refugees to hit Iraq. They put forth several ideas and numerous plans in this regard, while maintaining their aggressive drive. This is not a conflict over Kuwait between the United States and its allies on the one hand and Iraq on the other. It is a British-U.S. scheme referred to by President Saddam Husayn. President Saddam Husayn said that this scheme seeks to destroy and partition Iraq. With regard to the time needed for reconstructing what has been destroyed by the war, we would like to say that the reconstruction effort is going to cost much money and to take some time. The installations and plants that have been destroyed cannot be rebuilt overnight. The reconstruction of these installations and plants will be completed over a long period of time. Besides, it is going to have to be done at a high cost. The destruction of these installations and plants have deprived the citizens of many services.

The aggression struck the electricity and water sources before any form of land confrontation took place. Right now, you can see that I am driving a small car to reduce fuel consumption. I always carry around a barrel of petrol in another car which we take with us when we go on trips to the governorates. We never used to do this before the aggression. Therefore, the lack of fuel makes it difficult to provide the citizens in the governorates and villages with foodstuffs and services. Getting to the hospital in cases of emergency has become very difficult, to the extent that many deaths take place because the person cannot be transported from his home to the hospital.

[Al-Silawi] Will the lack of fuel last long?

[Salih] The government has a plan to overcome this problem, but it needs time.

[Al-Silawi] Will economic exchange with other countries be linked to their positions on the war?

[Salih] Despite the fact that the countries that entered the war against us are developed—and we need their technology, and despite the fact that part of what we need for our projects is exported from them, nevertheless, since there is no guarantee for permanent economic and trade dealings, and since they used economics as a weapon against Iraq regarding the Kuwait issue, the situation is very difficult. This is because it is difficult to tie up our interests in a particular installation—whether regarding requirements for production, raw materials, or reserve products—in a country whose policy in dealing with Iraq cannot be depended on.

The government is now raising this issue and studying it. Undoubtedly, the countries that stood by us have priority in everything. The countries that were not hostile to us, but at the same time did not help us—those countries that took a neutral stance—have preference over those countries which aggressed on us, in cases where our needs are available under the same specifications we demand.

When we can buy a desired product at the same price and with the same specifications from a friendly country, the new policy is not to buy this same product from a hostile source as long as it is available from a friendly country with the same price, quantity, and specifications.

[Al-Silawi] When it comes to exporting oil and by-products, it is well known that al-Basrah and al-'Aqabah ports are too small to absorb this traffic. Does this mean that the future will witness some sort of economic exchange and cooperation between Iraq and the neighboring countries?

[Salih] Firstly, exports via al-Basrah are not small. It used to be our major outlet before the Iraq-Iran war. From al-Basrah Port, we used to export about 3 million barrels of oil a day. During the Iran-Iraq war, these installations were destroyed and stopped functioning. Then they were rebuilt and ready to export, so the Americans deliberately destroyed them. Iraq was a

capable country and had good potential for exports, not only through Turkey and Saudi Arabia, but also through its own territories and regional waters. This was all part of the conspiracy against Iraq. They have been destroyed so Iraq will not have the opportunity to make a comeback and realize a greater income to spend on developing its economy and country. Why is there such determination to destroy the Iraqi missiles? Because they are the only ones that shattered the theory of Israeli security and hit Israel with 39 missiles across long distances. Therefore, Iraq, which has developed and which now has the capability to progress even further, has become a target of the aggression alliance. Iraq did not strike Israel before the aggression started, but after. The objective of the war was also to protect Israel and destroy all Arab capabilities which could weaken Israel's power in the region.

[Al-Silawi] What about economic relations with Turkey and the neighboring countries?

[Salih] Turkey's position differs in a way. It is benefiting from the United States and its allies. But they have not paid Turkey for its losses. The allies have not yet paid any sums to the countries harmed by the aggressive war against Iraq. They made promises to Arab and other countries, but in the end they extended only very little amounts. Thus, harm has not only befallen the Iraqi people, but also the countries that participated in the aggression. Furthermore, harm has befallen the countries with lesser participation, such as the socialist ones whose backward economies are deteriorating, and to whom Iraq owes debts, good amounts of which Iraq used to settle, but they are now prevented from recovering their debts. The United States and its allies did not help those countries, but rather contributed to destroying their economies and creating more social problems for them.

[Al-Silawi] Your Excellency the minister, how will Iraq's trade be affected in light of the provisions of the recent Security Council resolution? What is required of the great countries that stood and watched the war (China and the Soviet Union)?

[Salih] India and the Soviet Union adopted non-positive positions toward Iraq. We regard a neutral position as positive. Everyone economically boycotted us and approved the military aggression: That is not a neutral position. The honorable positions at the Security Council were those of Cuba and Yemen. Fraternal Jordan's position—king, people, and government—is one which history will record. History will record that this small people supported Iraq and stood by its side, not fearing the great countries. The positions of Yemen—leadership and people—the Algerian and Tunisian peoples, and Sudan—leadership and people—were clear and within clear lines. When we speak of trade exchange, these countries are given priority. In my opinion, for this reason and due to the geographical factor—now that economic relations with Kuwait, which was the outlet and marketing broker, has ceased in light of the current situation—Jordan will become the broker and trade outlet to the outside markets. Today Jordan has begun to grow as a market for export and import. In the past, the United Arab Emirates [UAE] was the largest center for exporting dates to the world because of Iraq's dates, as well as being a broker. Now Jordan is the alternative to the UAE in this field, and the field of export in general. Jordan will become the alternative to Kuwait with regard to export without foreign exchange and export in general.

[Al-Silawi] In light of what you have said on turning Jordan into a center for export and import to and from Iraq, do you see a need for establishing joint companies?

[Salih] There is fertile ground for this trend and process. It is needed, and must be developed and studied, not only with regard to trade and the economy. The bilateral agreement between Jordan and Iraq permits promoting such programs and ideas—which are not new—and the current situation permits such interaction.

[Al-Silawi] How does Iraq view the bilateral joint Iraqi-Arab committees?

[Salih] Iraq stresses the need for these countries to resume their activities as Arab countries. Trade, economic, scientific, and technical cooperation with the Arab countries should resume. The damage Iraq has suffered is due to its pan-Arab position and its commitment to the pan-Arab cause. The conflict always has been a pan-Arab one not a regional one in this war. Iraq now constitutes the vanguard of the independent Arab nation and the independent national will.

They planned for this battle and this conspiracy. They wanted to distract a large part of the Iraqi Army in the south and in Kuwait to enable mobs from Turkey and Iran to enter and destroy the country in cooperation with U.S. intelligence. They planned to start the process on the fourth day of the ground war. We have documents proving that that internal conspiracy was to be carried out early on the fourth day of the ground battle. The conspiracy against Iraq was carried out with unprecedented cruelty.

[Al-Silawi] Mr. Minister, what is the effect of the drop in the Iraqi dinar's value on Iraq's foreign trade?

[Salih] Imports stopped after the economic blockade, and the Iraqi dinar became a means for border trade, and not a means for foreign activity, because it is a local currency. But the economy suffered from problems following the Iraqi-Iranian war, including debts and a drop in revenues. The economic blockade then came, stopped everything, and affected the Iraqi dinar after the main sources of Iraq's revenues had stopped. Local spending increased because of the increase in the size of the Armed Forces and Iraq's reconstruction needs. Spending in local currency was great, while revenues were limited. The customs law also was suspended and frozen after having been a source of revenue. This also stopped the exemption of producers from taxes, and froze the profits

of the socialist sector's establishments, which were supplying the treasury. Therefore, the value of the dinar dropped. There was much spending and little revenues. So inflation developed, which is a temporary phenomenon and will cease with the end of the economic blockade and the increase in national production that will replace imported goods and will secure an overall economic activity to support the Iraqi dinar.

[Al-Silawi] What about Iraq's old but new democratic policy?

[Salih] Giving freedom to economic activity through a democratic method was adopted for a period of time, and it existed before the democratic change. The democratic way existed in the party's thought and in the present and former democratic practices. Its expansion through a large-scale practical method, the declaration of political pluralism, and promotion of this trend in light of the national interest will prevail in Iraq. National policy will lead Iraq toward the interests of the homeland and the people. Preventing foreign monopolies is a means and an end, and economic cooperation with all countries also is the state's policy.

We might import from an imperialist country if our national and pan-Arab interests call for that. Therefore, the effect of democratic interaction will entrench the popular awareness in the building process on the one hand, and avert dangers from Iraq on the other. Developing Iraq and restoring what was destroyed by the war will not be the way to bind Iraq in a non-national program.

[Al-Silawi] Is there an intention to expand the role of the private sector, and give it more flexibility and activity?

[Salih] Indeed, this will happen. Then we will have consolidated the current program. Since 1987, the private sector has given a great deal, but the situation of the country and the shortage of foreign currency were obstacles before it. For example, in the past the economic program used to earmark more than $1 billion annually for the private sector, whether industrial, trade, or tourist-related. Prior to the embargo, the amounts allocated to it were small due to the embargo and the shortage of foreign currency [sentence as published].

[Al-Silawi] What is the effect on Iraq of allocating a part of its oil for compensations, in accordance with the Security Council resolution?

[Salih] The Security Council resolution is oppressive, immoral, and inhumane. It portrays the extent of hatred toward this people and insistence on destroying culture. When a country like Iraq is exposed to such a barbaric aggression by 30 countries, what can it do?

Iraq was forced to accept their conditions in light of threats to its national unity. They want to allocate a part of Iraq's revenues to build Kuwait and compensate it for its losses. Iraq's losses were manifold due to the war, if compared to those of Kuwait. This would create historical roots which will neither lead to peace in the long run nor bring economic or other stability to the region. When part of our revenues are allocated to Kuwait—which was a part of our land in the past and became a part of it for a certain period—then this will entrech instability in the region as a whole. They are the ones who caused the destruction in Iraq.

[Al-Silawi] Who will compensate Iraq?

[Salih] We will calculate the damage and present it before the international community. When we are forced to pay compensation, it is not in Kuwait's interest to get compensation from us. Imposing a percentage for compensation means extorting our national will and putting the foreigner in control. This is a dangerous precedent in the Arab nation, which the world as a whole must confront. Did the United States impose such a punishment on itself when it destroyed the Palestinian people and Lebanon, and daily bombed the Palestinian people over the Lebanese land? When Israel bombed the Tammuz nuclear reactor, which is for peaceful purposes, the United States did not impose such sanctions on Israel. Through the aggression, it has become apparent to us that there are absolutely no human rights in any Western policy.

The United States and its Western allies have practiced the worst forms of world dictatorship, manifested in their barbaric war against Iraq in order to plunder and pillage the wealth of the Arab nation. This brought to mind ancient colonialism in all its barbarity, savagery, and greed.

Economic Committee To Discuss High Prices 23 Apr

JN2204143191 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1403 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Apr (INA)—Prime Minister Sa'dun Hammadi will chair the Economic Committee meeting tomorrow to discuss high prices in Iraq.

A cabinet spokesman told INA high prices also will be on the agenda of the Council of Ministers' next meeting.

A number of specialists from state departments and concerned institutions will attend the Economic Committee meetings.

Rationing of Oil Products Said To End Mid-June

NC2004155991 Paris AFP in English 1427 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, April 20 (AFP)—Rationing of oil products will end in mid-June after oil refineries and distribution networks damaged in the Gulf war resume operations, a newspaper reported Saturday.

Oil ministry technicians were trying to repair refineries as well as supply and distribution networks for oil

products, whose sale has been rationed for about a month, the daily AL-'IRAQ said, quoting a ministry communique.

Iraq has announced that al-Dawrah refinery near Baghdad, which was damaged during the war in January and February, was going to resume production of 76,000 barrels per day on May 1.

The Bayji refinery, 220 kilometers (132 miles) north of Baghdad, is the nation's largest and is due to resume production soon.

Each automobile driver is currently limited to 30 liters (2.4 gallons) of gasoline and 30 liters of diesel oil every 20 days.

Domestic Flights To Resume 'Early Next Month'

JN2204150691 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1426 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Apr (INA)—Iraqi Airways will begin domestic flights early next month. Director General Nur-al-Din al- Safi said the company has taken the necessary steps to resume operations among the governorates. There will be six flights a day between Baghdad and al-Basrah and four flights between Baghdad and Nineveh.

He said the company has provided buses to transport passengers from the al-Salihiyah bus terminal to Saddam International Airport and vice versa.

He also said the company is in constant touch with the competent authorities to bring international flights between Iraq and the world back to normal. He pointed out that agreement has been reached with other airlines to resume the transport of passengers and cargo.

He also explained that other international companies have expressed readiness to sign contracts and cooperate with Iraqi Airways.

Missing French TV Crew Found, To Be Released

NC2004133591 Paris AFP in English 1321 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, April 20 (AFP)—Three members of a French television crew who had gone missing in southern Iraq have been found in good health and will be handed over to the Information Ministry in Baghdad, Iraqi officials said Saturday.

The Iraqi Army will hand over Richard Binet, Didier Dahan and Fabian Briand—a three-man crew for Antenne 2 television—later Saturday, and they will be allowed to leave the country, the officials said.

They said the journalists had entered Iraq "illegally."

Antenne 2 announced on April 12 that it had had no news from its crew, on assignment to cover a Shiite Moslem revolt, since they were sighted by U.S. troops near the southern Iraqi town of al-Nasiriyah on April 9.

Negotiations With Kurdish Rebels Reported

NC1904171691 Paris AFP in English 1703 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 19 (AFP)—Representatives of Iraq's main Kurdish rebel groups have been holding negotiations with the Iraqi Government in Baghdad since Thursday, a source close to the rebels said here Friday.

The source said four members of the Kurdistan Front, an umbrella organisation for the rebels, were demanding the release of all prisoners "before any accord."

Foreign Minister Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir is representing the Iraqi Government, the source said, declining to be named.

Further on Government-Kurdish Talks

NC1904180991 Paris AFP in English 1745 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Excerpt] Tehran, April 19 (AFP)—[Passage omitted] Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir is representing his government in the talks with two members of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and two members of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPK), the source said.

The source, declining to be named, said that neither DPK leader Mas'ud Barzani nor PUK chief Jalal Talabani were in Baghdad.

President Saddam Husayn has sent several envoys to the rebels to call for a "new chapter between the Baghdad government and the Kurds," he said. A "very high-ranking general" and a Kurd were among the envoys.

The source said the rebels had accepted "the principle of negotiations," on condition that the army stopped its attacks on Kurds, a cease-fire came into effect and all prisoners were released.

The rebels were also seeking international guarantees for their people and still maintained a "total distrust" of Mr. Husayn, he said.

A DPK spokesman in Damascus said Thursday that a ceasefire was agreed Tuesday to allow leaders of the Kurdistan Front to study a proposal from Baghdad "concerning the granting of autonomy to the Kurds."

"The proposal from the regime calls for a settlement of the Kurdish problem based on the March 1970 accord concerning the granting of autonomy to the Kurds as well as the realization of pluralism and democracy" in Iraq, he said.

The Kurdistan Front is examining the Iraqi proposals, although they were initially seen as "insufficient," the DPK official added.

Iraq has offered an amnesty for Kurdish rebels after a revolt that erupted in northern Iraq following the Gulf war. More than one million Kurds have fled the region, crossing the borders to Iran and Turkey.

Ibrahim 'Heading' Baghdad Side

NC2104185891 Paris AFP in English 1849 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, April 21 (AFP)—'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of Iraq's ruling Revolutionary Command Council, is heading the Iraqi Government delegation [to talks] with Kurdish rebels, an informed source said here Sunday.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz and Defense Minister 'Ali Hasan al-Majid are also taking part in the negotiations, the source said.

The negotiations, which the source said started "less than 10 days ago" in Baghdad, involve representatives of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

They are based on the March 11, 1970 agreements which promised autonomy to the Kurds while considering them as an integral part of Iraq.

"If things continue to move in this way, the two parties should reach an accord very soon," the source said.

Iraqi authorities declined to comment on the report.

Minister Says More Than 117,000 Kurds Return Home

JN1904190391 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1805 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Culture and Information Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi has stated that the Kurdish citizens, whom the gangs of rebellion forced to flee to the border areas with Iran and Turkey, continue to return to their cities and villages in the northern region.

In a statement to INA, the culture and information minister said 117,096 Kurdish citizens have returned this week up to the present day.

Number Reaches 132,242

JN2004185091 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1820 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] The IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent in the northern sector has said that the number of Kurdish returnees, who were compelled by the gangs of saboteurs to flee to the border areas with Iran and Turkey, today reached 132,242 citizens.

The correspondent noted that the number of the returnees is increasing, and that local authorities are providing them with all necessary facilities to return them to their cities and villages.

Paper Sees U.S. 'Interference' in Internal Affairs

JN2004082991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0645 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Excerpts] Baghdad, 20 Apr (INA)—The newspaper AL-QADISIYAH expresses confidence that the rest of the Kurdish citizens will return to the homeland as soon as possible once they learn the truth about of the (?Western) game of rancor that was planned by the Zionists and imperialists.

In an editorial today, the newspaper says that reshuffling the cards and distorting the picture have always been the primary objective of whoever tried to harm Iraq's sovereignty and security and to extend the hand of begging and alliance to the enemies of Iraq. Therefore, distortion, deception, and fabrication are the mission of the rancorous ones who want to destroy the pillars of Iraq's awakening. [passage omitted]

The paper says: Those rancorous ones from beyond the border believed they could attain these base objectives. But the will of God and truth, the capability of our brave Armed Forces, and the wisdom of a genius leadership confused this plot very swiftly, destroyed the sedition, crushed its defeated dens, and restored control over our beloved north.

As soon as security and stability were restored, the leadership, out of its solicitude for the sons of our Kurdish people and based on its knowledge of the intentions behind that plot, called on the sons of our Kurdish people to return to their cities and homes to resume their normal life. This was because the malicious sedition, fomented by those who harbor rancor against Iraq and its security and stability, which had caused them leave their homes in the first place, has been terminated.

The paper says that the hostile forces, headed by the United States and its followers in plotting and disgrace, have exploited circumstances so as to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs. However, the paper adds, everyone should realize that the agreement signed between Iraq and the United Nations will obstruct all the feeble pretexts and bad and fabricated intentions used to justify interference in Iraq's internal affairs. The U.S. and its followers should observe international law and abide by the international agreements that prohibit encroachments on the sovereignty of any UN member-state regardless of pretexts and reasons. They have claimed for a long time that their actions are guided by these reasons and pretexts, out of respect for international legitimacy. All those people should stop interfering in our internal affairs. We are more concerned about our people than those who tried to oppress our people and fanned a merciless sedition against them.

Concluding, the paper says: Yes, we tell the world we are more concerned about the sons of our Kurdish people than those who are fishing in troubled waters.

AL-QADISIYAH Denounces U.S. 'Interference'

JN2104094391 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0740 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Apr (INA)—The newspaper AL-QADISIYAH asserts that the United States has used everything in its power, hatched conspiracies, and fomented acts of sabotage to strike at Iraq and destroy its infrastructure, exploiting so-called international legitimacy, the United Nations, and the UN Security Council to carry out its schemes.

In an editorial published today under the headline "Conspiracies Fail While Iraq Remains Free and Unified," the paper adds: Since the beginning of the so-called Gulf crisis, Iraq has cautioned the international community against the dangers posed by U.S. moves, explaining the hostile objectives the United States seeks to achieve in the entire region. Some thought that we were exaggerating the magnitude of the aggression whose links and phases were planned in advance. But once the plots against Iraq were unleashed, the United States began to implement the chapters of the conspiracy through the resolutions the United States passed in the name of the Security Council against Iraq, resolutions whose passage was secured through threats, bribery, and a hegemonic exercise of power. These resolutions did not express the real desires of the international community.

The paper says that the American dream is to fragment Iraq and to impose complete U.S. domination over it. The paper adds: However, this colonialist dream has not been realized, and in no time a new picture has emerged. The picture is of the internal stability throughout the domestic front; the entombment of the mobs' sedition which was planned, supported, and fed by imperialist anti-Iraq quarters; the preservation of Iraq's unity; the demonstration of national unity in a new and bright form; the rejection of the mobs by all of the people of Iraq whether living in the farthest point in the north or in the most remote areas in southern Iraq; and the start of the reconstruction effort to rebuild what the aggression has destroyed.

The paper goes on to say: All this has created a new situation that conflicts with the American dream. The United States has achieved its objectives through aggression, but it has failed to consummate its conspiracy to see Iraq go through the ordeals desired by imperialist and Zionist minds. That is why it resorted to direct White House decisions, as it is no longer in need of the Security Council or international legitimacy. This has been made possible through its collusion with Britain and France to dispatch troops to northern Iraq without obtaining prior international permission or Iraq's approval as required by international law.

The paper notes that the United States has begun to interfere in Iraq's affairs flagrantly and insolently, without having any legal rights and in a manner that is harmful and deterimental to Iraq. The paper adds that this U.S. policy is a manifestation of conspicuous disregard for the international community and its laws and organizations.

The paper urges the international community to explore the true nature of the facts regarding the resolutions that the White House made the Security Council pass against Iraq. It also urges the entire world to stand against the United States and its hostile policy against Iraq and other countries, which is well known to all. It also advises that the world should abandon its servility and subordination to the United States.

AL-QADISIYAH refers to the dangers posed by the policy of the United States, which will fight everybody's interests when they clash with the interests of the United States. The paper adds that U.S. policy unequivocally and undoubtedly reveals the true nature of U.S. objectives, as well as the veils this policy uses to achieve these hostile and ill-intentioned objectives.

U.S. Dispatch of Forces to North Criticized

JN2104093091 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0748 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Apr (INA)—In its editorial today, AL-THAWRAH denounces the new aggressive measure carried out by the United States against Iraq by dispatching military forces to the northern part of the country under the false pretext of establishing centers to help what it calls Kurdish refugees.

AL-THAWRAH declares that this provocative behavior is blatant interference in Iraq's domestic affairs and a flagrant violation of international law.

AL-THAWRAH says that this U.S. measure comes in the wake of the official enforcement of the cease-fire resolution and the conclusion of an agreement of understanding between Iraq and the United Nations to coordinate relief provided by international agencies to alleviate the suffering of the afflicted Iraqi citizens.

The paper emphasizes that the U.S. claim that the camps its forces are establishing in northern Iraq are part of the agreement that Iraq concluded with the United Nations is a groundless claim because this move took place prior to the agreement and because the camps were established illegally.

AL-THAWRAH explains that what the U.S. Administration is doing is the natural and logical result of handling all international crises and problems alone.

Concluding, the paper asserts that no matter how much the U.S. Administration takes hostile measures and conspires against our people, and no matter how much it tries to defame and hurt Iraq's reputation, it will never

succeed in dampening the Iraqis' determination and their desire to rally around their historic leadership.

AL-QADISIYAH Claims U.S. 'Partition' Continues

JN2204094791 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0730 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Apr (INA)—AL-QADISIYAH says that developments after fabricating the so-called Gulf crisis, including the military aggression against Iraq and the partition plot, prove that the United States, the war criminal, is not trying to restore security and peace in the region. In today's editorial, AL-QADISIYAH, organ of the Defense Ministry, says that the United States' major objective is to spread chaos, entrench the state of hostility, and continue its plot against Iraq regardless of the price to be paid by the peoples in the region.

AL-QADISIYAH adds: Before the unjust aggression, Iraq understood U.S. objectives and warned of their serious results. What is taking place now not only confirms the soundness of the Iraqi stance, but has also removed all the masks of all the parties to the plot against Iraq, the region, and the Arab nation—whether worn by Bush and his suspect international alliance or the agent and treasonous rulers in the region who intentionally pursued the scheme to colonize the region, steal its wealth after the crime of striking at Iraq, and to destroy the centers of its scientific, economic, and military awakening.

The paper notes that what confirms this serious and aggressive U.S. policy, which has exceeded all limits, laws, and norms are the continued threats to Iraq and the interference in its internal affairs. These threats and interference are not taking place under the UN umbrella that Washington used in the past to obtain a legal cover for its hostility, but are blatantly unilateral decisions and measures that even disregard that kind of international legitimacy and the new international role about which Bush bragged in his aggression against Iraq and in the stealing of Arab oil wealth.

Every day, the paper says, we feel this blatant U.S. attitude, which expresses the aggressiveness of U.S. policy and harbors premeditated intentions against Iraq—people, security, and national unity—in the belligerency in the air. This is designed to terrify citizens and exploit sedition in the northern part of the homeland so as to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs and in the attempts to wrest away its independent policy.

The paper adds that the latest U.S. act of hostility is the impudent decision the U.S. Congress allowed itself to issue regarding the so-called trial of Iraqi war criminals, as if Iraq were an U.S. state, not an independent, sovereign state, a founding member of the United Nations, and a genuine, historical country.

AL-QADISIYAH stresses that all these U.S. acts confirm that the plot to strike at Iraq continues, despite the cease-fire resolution. This shows that Washington is not earnestly striving for peace, but is continuing the policy of isolating countries, taking away the roles and objectives of international organizations and making them adjuncts of the U.S. Administration, whether they like it or not.

Oppositionists Warn Against Partition Attempts

LD2004214691 Tehran IRNA in English 1834 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 20, IRNA—A spokesman for Iraq's main opposition group on Saturday described the American-led creation of safe havens in Iraqi Kurdistan as an "attempt to partition Iraq."

The statement of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI) came after the inking of an agreement between a U.N. representative and the Ba'thist regime of Iraq concerning safe havens for refugees in northern Iraq.

SAIRI supported "sincere efforts" in favour of the "entire Iraqi nation living in southern and northern Iraq," and appealed to the people of the world to help uproot the cause of the plight of Iraqi refugees both in the north and the south.

"To be satisfied with temporary solutions while Saddam Husayn is still in power can only increase the sufferings of the Iraqi people," it said.

The spokesman also termed statements made by U.S. President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker calling for Saddam's removal as "promising" but said the demand comes "too late".

Forced to retreat in a humiliating fashion from Kuwait, the unpopular regime of Saddam Husayn plunged Iraq into history's most sanguine bloodbath, massacring over half a million Iraqi Arabs and driving some 1.5 million Iraqi Kurds into neighbouring Iran and Turkey.

The U.N. has since come up with a dubious solution, calling for "safe havens" in Iraqi Kurdistan, but turning a blind eye to the worsening plight of the majority of the Iraqi population, the almost 10-million strong Shi'ite Arabs.

[Tehran IRNA in English at 1855 GMT on 20 April in a Tehran-datelined item adds: "A spokesman for the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI) today dismissed the remarks of the premier of the Ba'thist regime of Iraq, Sa'dun Hammadi, as another 'clumsy attempt to mislead world public opinion.'

["Hammadi whose unpopular regime last month massacred almost a million Iraqis in southern and northern Iraq, and turned some 2 million others into homeless refugees, recently spoke of presidential elections and constitutional amendments in Iraq, obviously to tighten the Ba'thist grip on power.

["'If Hammadi is really serious of what he means then he should immediately hand in his resignation to SAIRI leader Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir Hakim,' said the spokesman.

["The SAIRI spokesman expressed hope that the European Community would continue its efforts to help 'rid Iraq of the curse of the Ba'thist regime', and pave the way for establishment of a 'multi-party system of government able to guarantee the individual freedom and rights of the people.'

["He said Iraq's relations with other countries in the future will be based on the national interests of the Iraqi people and on the present stands of those countries towards the events in Iraq and their calls for the 'toppling Saddam (Husayn) and his murderous clique.'"]

Opposition Claims U.S. Fears 'National Awakening'

LD2104204791 Tehran IRNA in English 1705 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 21, IRNA—Iraq's leading opposition group, the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI) met here Sunday to review the current position of the popular uprising against the tyrannical Ba'thist regime in Baghdad.

Addresing the gathering, Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim said Washington encouraged Saddam Husayn's regime to "brutally" put down the uprising in southern and northern Iraq because of its fears of a national awakening in that country. He also expressed regret over the stance taken by certain Muslim and Arab states towards the mass slaughters of Iraqi muslims at the hands of the unpopular Ba'thist regime before the very eyes of the Americans and the world.

"The stand of Europe and certain regional states, despite some positive points was the same as Washington's because they consider the U.S. stance as the main one," Hakim said. The bloodbath unleashed by Saddam Husayn in Iraq following his ignominous retreat from Kuwait, claimed the lives of over half a million Iraqi Arabs, and rendered millions of others homeless. On negotiations under way between some Iraqi Kurdish groups known as the "Iraqi Kurdish Front" and the Baghdad regime, the SAIRI chief said that the talks were not aimed at keeping Saddam in power but rather to get a position in Iraq's future government. Hakim called on the Kurdish front to coordinate its stand with that of other opposition groups because he said such unity would have far reaching impacts on the future of Iraq and the Iraqi people. The SAIRI head also threw light on the continued clashes inside Iraq especially in the south, and paid tribute to the popular forces for keeping up the resistance against the unelected Ba'thist regime. Despite its exagerated claims, Saddam's regime is finding it hard to control most major Iraqi cities south of Baghdad.

Opposition Radio Notes Talabani-Government Talks

NC2004141991 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Opposition in Arabic 1300 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] A spokesman for the Democractic Party of Kurdistan [DPK] has said that DPK leader Jalal Talabani and three DPK members are currently in Baghdad at the invitation of the defeated tyrant Saddam Husayn to hold talks with regime officials on the future of Kurdistan. The spokesman said that Talabani will ask the tyrant's regime to implement all clauses of the 1970 agreement and to give the Kurds complete self-rule.

The spokesman says that the delegation's visit to Baghdad came in the wake of several exchanges, after which the dictatorial regime requested that a high-level delegation visit Baghdad. Spokesman (Sharwan Livi) said that the delegation will propose to the tyrant's regime that any agreement be backed by guarantees from the international community, preferably the United Nations.

This is the third time Jalal Talabani has attempted to exploit the situation, reach agreement with the tyrant, undermine popular uprisings, and promote his personal interests.

Authorities' 'Frantic' Contact Attempt Claimed

LD2104204191 Tehran IRNA in English 1749 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 21, IRNA—The Iraqi regime has made repeated but unsuccessful efforts to establish contacts with the Islamic groups operating under the umbrella of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI), it was disclosed here today.

A SAIRI spokesman said the Baghdad regime's frantic efforts started in the early days of the uprising, however, the Islamic groups turned down Saddam Husayn's pleas due to their commitment to the Damascus Declaration, whose first article underlines the toppling of present unpopular regime in Iraqi.

"We can never think of holding talks with a regime, which massacres the people so barbarically," said the spokesman, who refrained to comment on talks under way in Baghdad between some Kurdish groups and the Saddam regime.

SAIRI is committed to the Damascus Declaration as well as the approvals of the Beirut conference, and "the overthrow of Saddam's hated regime is certainly the primary goal of all Iraqi people", he added.

Opposition Reports Moves Against Saddam's Forces

NC2104154691 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Opposition in Arabic 1500 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Formerly Voice of Free Iraq]

[Text] The masses supporting the uprising in the south have carried out special operations against the tyrant's forces.

They recently attacked Republican Guards units in the al-Tannumah University sector, destroyed three tanks, and inflicted losses on the ranks of the tyrant's forces. During a clash with the tryant's forces in the Shatt al-'Arab region, the popular forces captured a major and destroyed military vehicles, including a T-72 tank.

Meanwhile, the tyrant's regime is carrying out acts of revenge against the families of those involved in the uprising. His forces have destroyed 17 houses and three mosques used as assembly points for the uprising in Karbala' city.

'Heavy Losses' to Al-Basrah Brigade Claimed

NC2104200391 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1924 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Relying on God Almighty and firmly determined to proceed toward liberation, a unit from the sons of our rebelling people carried out another bold act of victorious liberation on the night of Sunday, 6 Shawwal Hegira, corresponding to 21 April.

The unit attacked important enemy positions in the al-Basrah area. Our correspondent, who was with the mujahidin revolutionaries throughout the entire operation, reported that the revolutionaries attacked along three axes with various types of weapons. Their target was the enemy positions of the 23d Brigade from the 5th Division. As usual, the enemy fled when the attack began, but the revolutionaries soon pursued them to their new positions. Panic and fear gripped the enemy forces from the outset of the heavy fighting that ensued. The revolutionaries inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, estimated by the participating brothers at more than 400 casualties. They also destroyed the command of one of the regiments belonging to the 23d Brigade, where several commanders had gathered. A tank near this command was put out of action.

The mujahidin unit returned safely to base after executing its mission. Only one of the mujahidin was injured. He suffered light burns from a shell and received prompt treatment.

IRNA on Clashes Between Iraqi Troops, People

LD1904165791 Tehran IRNA in English 1511 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., April 19, IRNA—The Voice of Revolutionary Iraq, a radio station run by Iraqi opposition groups has accused the U.S. and some European governments of exploiting the sufferings of Iraqi Kurds as a means of materializing their goals in the region.

The radio, monitored here, was apparently reacting to a U.S. proposal on a safe haven for Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq.

"While hundreds of our children and old men and women are dying of hunger and diseases along [the] borders, there is not sign of American and European assistance.

"This is while the Western mass media have been despatching news reports on a decision by the U.S. and some European countries to deploy troops in norther Iraq under the pretext of protecting Iraqi Kurds," it said.

In a separate news broadcast, the radio said Iraqi warplanes have attacked the eastern city of Sulaymaniyah with chemical bombs, killing and wounding many people. It said the attack coincided with Saddam's so-called general amnesty to the Kurdish community.

In related news, an informed source told IRNA here that Iraqi Kurdish militants have crushed an attempt by troops loyal to the Baghdad regime to recapture heights in north of Sulaymaniyah.

During the aborted attack which took place Wednesday the Battalion 28 of the Republican Guards was wiped out and its commander a brigadier general was killed, the source said.

Reports reaching here from inside Iraq said Iraqi Government troops have killed hundreds of people during clashes in Sulaymaniyah over the past week.

Warrant Officer Rayem Mohammad of the 44th Division who took refuge in Iran Thursday afternoon said clashes between Iraqi people and government troops were raging on in Iraqi cities such as Karbala, al-Najaf, al-Amara and al-Samawah.

He said scores of Iraqi soldiers of the Battalion 483 have deserted in recent days.

Another Iraqi military refugee, Sergeant Seyed Helleh of the 8th Brigade of the 2nd Corps said he was an eyewitness to the mass execution of 30 Iraqi dissidents in the city of al-Kahla in the southern Province of Maysan.

Several other Iraqi refugees arriving in Iran via the southern border crossings told of continued battles between rising Iraqi people and government forces in southern Iraq.

They said the clashes were raging more heavily in al-Basrah, al- Tannumah, al Qurnah, al-Amara and al-Nasiriyah.

A refugee claimed that thousands of Iraqi people fighting the Ba'thist army in al-Basrah have been arrested and taken to custody in al-Basrah University.

He said most Iraqi universities and colleges in al-Basrah, al- Tannumah, al-Qurna have been turned into prisons.

Another refugee said Iraqi Republican Guards were patrolling al- Basrah-Baghdad and al-Basrah-Amara [highways] to hunt revolutionary people whose names were on their blacklist.

Reports on, Reaction to Baker-Government Meetings

No Decision on Meeting Participants

TA1904141291 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1400 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] All issues pertaining to the promotion of the political process were discussed in the meeting between Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir, Foreign Minister David Levi, and Secretary James Baker. Our political correspondent Arye Golan reports that these issues included the regional conference, Palestinian representation, and the differences between the interim agreement and a permanent solution. No decision has been made yet on who will participate in the regional meeting.

Secretary Baker plans to return to Israel on Tuesday, following visits to Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Syria.

Shamir Trying To 'Avoid' Conflict

TA2104100891 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 21 Apr 91 pp 1,2

[Report by political correspondent Hemi Shalev]

[Excerpts] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir intends to avoid a confrontation with the United States and will therefore not reject all the questions left by U.S. Secretary of State Baker during their meeting two days ago. This was made clear by political sources in Jerusalem.

The United States wishes to hear Israel's position regarding a "peace conference" that would deal with regional problems, concurrently with the two-track political negotiations. Such a conference would not break up right after the opening ceremony, but would not be authorized to discuss bilateral issues without the agreement of all parties. The United States also wants to know whether Israel would accept European and UN participation in the process, and if so, what would their status be and under which conditions. The other questions are: Would Israel agree to attend a conference in which only Jordan and Egypt take part? Does Israel demand the right to veto the Palestinian members of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation? Would Israel accept the participation of Palestinians like Radwan Abu-'Ayyash and Ziyad Abu-Zayyad, who though residents of the territories have a certain connection with East Jerusalem?

Senior political sources yesterday claimed that there was some exaggeration in the U.S. press, which apparently gets its information from sources inside Baker's retinue, about the scope of the current disagreement between Baker and Shamir. The sources in Jerusalem asserted that the United States is trying to create an atmosphere of confrontation in order to facilitate their negotiations with the Arab countries.

Nevertheless, Foreign Ministry sources said that Shamir definitely could not give positive answers to all of Baker's questions, adding that even Foreign Minister David Levi opposes some of the secretary's new proposals. However, even a partially affirmative answer, the sources in Jerusalem believe, would put off a crisis in U.S.-Israeli relations. [passage omitted]

The sources estimate that Shamir may agree to the participation of the Europeans in the conference, with observer status, and under the condition that the EC declare that it has changed its position regarding the PLO and the international conference. Shamir will also give the go-ahead for the establishment of international sub-committees on regional issues such as disarmament and water, while attempting to remove them from the main negotiations. Shamir will agree to take part in a conference with any Arab composition and will not necessarily reject the demand to include residents of the territories, whom the Americans wish to present as having links to East Jerusalem. This, on condition that they fulfill the criterion of non-affiliation with the PLO.

Sources close to Shamir made it clear yesterday that, as far as Israel is concerned, the delegations which met Baker during his three visits here are completely unacceptable because of their public declaration that they are affiliated with the PLO. The sources asserted that Shamir would not agree to an international conference, nor would he accept attempts to turn the regional meeting into something similar to an international conference. Shamir also would not accept the inclusion of people considered by Israel to be residents of East Jerusalem. The sources added that the United States is mistaken if it expects Shamir to change his position on any of these issues.

From the talks held by Baker in Jerusalem, it appears that the United States is now talking about a peace conference whose first stages will not include Saudi Arabia or the Gulf states. This follows from the Arab position that was presented to Baker in his previous round of talks.

In addition, the Americans appear to be extremely pessimistic about the possibility of Syria eventually agreeing to join the process, and their efforts are now mainly meant to keep Damascus from getting in the way of Jordan's and Egypt's progress in the negotiations. This is the reason Jerusalem no longer attaches great importance to Israel's refusal to incorporate the United Nations in the negotiations, as this demand was mainly raised by President al- Asad and not by the other Arab countries. [passage omitted]

The sources reported that the critical meeting in Baker's current trip did not take place in Jerusalem but in al-'Aqabah, where Baker tried to gauge the conditions necessary to get King Husayn's agreement for the establishment of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. If Baker secured Husayn's agreement, the sources said, this would constitute a breakthrough and greatly increase the possibility of reaching understanding on the Palestinian representation.

The sources added that the issue of settlements was not discussed to any great extent during this round of talks, and this indicates that Baker still wants to "work with Shamir" and not stretch relations too far. [passage omitted]

Positive Replies 'Impossible'

TA2104105691 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Interview with Transportation Minister Moshe Qatzav by correspondent Natan Gutman outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem—live]

[Text] [Gutman] The ministers have already begun filing out of the building. Let us first of all report that Tehiya has already threatened that if the Palestinians appear in a separate delegation, it will quit the government. This is the first condition, placing the first constraint on the initiative [not further specified]. Shortly we will try to interview Minister Moshe Qatzav, who is currently granting an interview to the television.

[Qatzav, in progress] ...which are insubstantial; we are really dealing with vital issues that pertain to our very existence. Since this is the case, we have no alternative but to make sure already at this stage—to forestall possible subsequent accusations that we had been dragging our feet or misleading—that we state our position precisely and make that clear both to the Americans and to the Arabs.

[Israel Television political correspondent 'Imanu'el Halperin] You mean a series of nos?

[Qatzav] No. The Arabs have thus far not come up with any initiative. They have not yet responded in the affirmative to anything. The whole world expects only Israel to do so. Perhaps someone would be kind enough to remind us to what issue the Arabs have given a positive response to in the past two or three weeks. They have given no positive answers. The onus is being placed entirely on Israel, while Israel has been doing everything: It came up with an initiative, it provided affirmative replies. Nonetheless, there are issues over which we remain firm. Yes, that is true.

[Gutman] Minister Qatzav, do you believe there is a possibility that Israel would give a positive reply to all of Baker's questions?

[Qatzav] That depends on the questions. Those issues to which we found it appropriate to give an affirmative response, we did already during his first or second visit. The U.S. secretary of state simply arrived with a host of additional issues which had not been agreed upon during the previous two meetings. It is simply impossible to say yes to these issues. However, these are merely generalizations at this point.

[Gutman] Even if Israel is going to be held responsible for blowing up the talks?

[Qatzav] The talks will not blow up; Israel gave affirmative replies to a large number of the questions. We hope the Arabs will not say no. The ball is not currently in the Israeli court, even if there are some U.S. or Arab elements who may try to claim the opposite. There is no explosion, there is no crisis or ultimatum; what we have are issues being discussed at length, leaving them open still. That is correct.

[Gutman] Thank you very much, Minister Qatzav.

Let us now point out the main things: Baker will return to Israel on Wednesday. Tehiya says that if there is a separate Palestinian delegation it will secede from the coalition. Minister Qatzav and other ministers [earlier identified on the same cast as including Minister Rehav'am Ze'evi of Moledet. Ze'evi also reportedly said that he is surprised by the "kid-glove attitude accorded King Husayn" by the United States] who participated in the debate say there is no pressure; the ball is not in the Israeli court. As for optimism—maybe. That is all for the moment from the cabinet session.

Levi, Ministers Note Continuing Talks

TA2104125391 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1005 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Studio discussion between moderator Roni Daniyel and correspondent Ze'ev Kohen "soon after the end of the weekly cabinet session"—live]

[Text] [Daniyel] Ze'ev Kohen, shalom. What is the cabinet now saying?

[Kohen] If we can provide a headline for the cabinet meeting, it is that James Baker will be returning on Wednesday and the discussions with him will continue. What happened in the cabinet meeting? Foreign Minister David Levi reported on the talks he and the prime minister conducted with Baker. Levi said there is no crisis with the United States. We are trying to promote the process while maintaining our positions and principles and while sticking to the government's peace initiative. David Levi said that if there is somebody among us who thinks that the government's peace initiative can be written off, then he should say he does not want a political process. Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said we will continue the political process with the United States. I was told the cabinet debate was held in a calm atmosphere and that there was no great opposition to what was said. Most of the ministers accepted the reports.

[Daniyel] I understand that the Israeli Government is now dealing with several questions presented by Baker. Does the government have to provide answers by Wednesday?

[Kohen] Yes, the questions are there and the discussions will continue.

[Daniyel] In other words, the door was not shut. The answers to the Baker questions that in 1989, if I am not mistaken, almost broke up the government.

[Kohen] It is not out of the question that there might be negative answers this time as well. There are things Israel cannot agree to, such as the participation of East Jerusalem Palestinians. Or, at this stage, Israel says that it is not prepared for a UN representative to take part in the talks. On this, however, discussions continue, and it cannot be said that it is the end of the road. Talks are continuing. Let us hear what Minister Ehud Olmert had to say on leaving the cabinet meeting. He reiterated that there is no crisis in our ties with the United States.

[Begin Olmert recording] I believe that presenting the issues as though we are on the verge of a confrontation or in the midst of a confrontation is inaccurate. In the clarification process taking place between ourselves and the United States, it is only natural that there are also issues of disagreement. It seems to me, however, that all the sides agree that these disagreements have to be clarified, and are trying to reach agreement. I myself, at least, did not get the impression that we have come to the end of the road in the process. I believe that the Americans also do not believe this. Anyway, as far as I can tell, based on the reports which have reached here, there is a continuing discussion with chances of reaching understandings. I would under no circumstances define it as a confrontation. [end recording]

[Kohen] Minister Olmert talked about disagreements, but says that they can be bridged. What we were told by Education and Culture Minister Zvulun Hammer was in a similar vein:

[Begin recording] [Hammer] The fact is, as was reported to us, there is no crisis. The Americans returned from the talks with the Palestinians with some sort of change in the understandings we reached with them, which from our viewpoint, of course, creates some difficulty about procedure: Participation by the United Nations and the Europeans, the exact definition of Jerusalem, and the PLO, etc. These are things on which we have stands, and I hope that our positions will also be accepted.

[Kohen] But there are issues to which Israel will not be able to respond affirmatively, such as the issue of Palestinian representation and the participation of East Jerusalem Arabs, and UN participation. Will those issues not bring about a crisis with the United States, in the final analysis?

[Hammer] If the United States claims that there will be an international conference, then there will be a crisis. If the United States claims that the United Nations is part of this conference on par with the United States and the USSR, there will be a problem. The same is true about Europe. We will not come to a conference in which we will be dictated to by elements which appear not to be on the same wavelength as us, and where we will not permitted to hold talks with the Arabs themselves. We expected this to be the change which has taken place in the Middle East: That the Arabs are prepared for real, direct talks with us. If they themselves come up with ideas in which Europe, and perhaps somebody from the United Nations, participates symbolically—we will not agree to the PLO—then a way might be found. [end recording]

[Kohen] If we move from here to the internal scene in the scramble between the political parties, then Minister Yuval Ne'eman, when he left the meeting, painted Tehiya's red lines, which if crossed will find the party out of the government.

[Begin Ne'eman recording] If the cabinet decides to stop building in Judaea and Samaria, then it would be inconceivable for us to remain in a government that agrees to such a dictate. We would also not accept negotiations with a Palestinian delegation—a delegation of the Arabs of Eretz Yisra'el, which would seem like recognition of them—as though they were also a state. If the Arabs of Eretz Yisra'el are part of a Jordanian delegation—since, to our regret, we view Jordan as Palestine, although it is also part of Eretz Yisra'el, but in fact it is currently not in our hands and has a Palestinian majority—then we can accept that. We will not, however, accept a separate Palestinian delegation. [end recording]

[Daniyel] A return to constraints?

[Kohen] Yes, certainly.

[Daniyel] There are a number of constraints members in the cabinet, as you know, such as Rehav'am Ze'evi.

[Kohen] To sum up then, Roni, in one sentence what occurred in today's cabinet meeting: there was a report. There is no crisis with the United States, Minister David Levi reported. James Baker returns Wednesday.

Levi: No Coercion, Pressure

TA2104132791 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1300 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Secretary Baker will return to Israel on Wednesday for more talks. Foreign Minister David Levi reported to the cabinet today that there is no coercion, there is no crisis, and no pressure in the talks. The points which still require discussion are the name of the conference, whether it will end after the opening event or convene again, and the participation of the USSR, European countries, and the United Nations. Israel wants a Jordanian- Palestinian delegation that opposes the PLO, and also objects to the participation of an East Jerusalem representative.

Our correspondent Ze'ev Kohen reports that Baker's return on Wednesday was not made conditional upon Israel's providing positive answers to his questions.

Ben-Aharon Comments

TA2104173191 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Interview with Yosi Ben-Aharon, director general of the Prime Minister's Office, by Eli Nisan in Ben-Aharon's office on 21 April—recorded in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles]

[Text] [Ben-Aharon] The process has been a long one; it is one in which Secretary of State Baker has been trying to bridge the differences of opinion between us and the Arab side. The United States does not state its position on substantive matters. It has its own views, but for the sake of negotiations, Baker shuttles between Jerusalem and the Arab capitals and back again in an attempt to find out the subjects over which understandings are possible. It would therefore be incorrect to say that there were understandings that do not exist today, just as it would be wrong to claim that there were problems that have been solved. The process, in simple terms, is still going on.

[Nisan] Mr. Ben-Aharon, the feeling today is that the ball is in Israel's court, following reports that the U.S. secretary of state left a series of questions here. Is there room for Israeli flexibility toward U.S. demands?

[Ben-Aharon] Most of the questions presented by the United States were actually Arab questions relayed via the Americans. I would like us not to categorize the positions as flexible or not. We have our position, which we believe is the most flexible possible, because we want peace with our neighbors and with the Arabs living here. We are prepared to talk to them directly and to lay the issues down on the table, whereas the Arab side has still not recognized the State of Israel, is still at a state of war with us, and wants a conference after which Israel will find itself isolated, a conference in which the Arabs will make some decisions and set certain norms—perhaps even dictates—as a result of which Israel will be under such pressure that the Arab countries will be able either to extract concessions we will not be able to live with or to claim: See, it is Israel which is inflexible and intransigent. We will, of course, not step into such a trap.

[Nisan] Does the fact that the U.S. secretary of state conferred with Husayn on the declarations emanating from Jordan indicate that Jordan will indeed participate in the political process in the region?

[Ben-Aharon] I very much hope so. As everyone knows, the Israeli Government and the prime minister have often expressed the importance they attach to the inclusion of Jordan, which is a Palestinian state in every respect. The Palestinian public, after all, is divided between Jordan and those who live west of the Jordan River. Additionally, Jordan is our best neighbor, the one with which we share the longest border. Consequently, no process would be viable without Jordan. I believe the secretary of state is aware of all this so that, although there were differences of opinion and even a crisis in relations between Washington and Amman, hopefully the secretary's current visit to Jordan will open a new leaf, allowing for Jordan's incorporation into the process.

[Nisan] One of the problems was the affiliation of the delegation of Palestinians from the territories to the PLO. What is Israel's attitude toward this issue?

[Ben-Aharon] As you know, there are currently contacts between the secretary of state and a group of Arabs from Jerusalem and from Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza. I think that they may be entertaining the illusion that Israel would accept their being PLO representatives for all intents and purposes, so that indirect negotiations with the PLO will in effect be conducted through them. Well, they had better free themselves of this illusion, because we will not allow the PLO to enter or be involved in the process directly or indirectly, or by way of a dialogue with the United States in Tunis or in Jerusalem, even if it is conducted by people who conceal their identity, believing that we do not know the truth. If that happens, no progress will be made. I believe that for the sake of the Arab inhabitants, whose welfare we desire and with whom we want to reach an understanding and coexistence, they will be well advised to realize that they must totally cut off all ties with the PLO.

[Nisan] Mr. Ben-Aharon, what is the scenario you can conjure up in your mind after three rounds of talks with Baker here in Israel?

[Ben-Aharon] It is hard to tell. We still need to hear things from the secretary of state in the course of the current round, which is actually the second round. One must bear in mind that only now, in this latest round, has the secretary gotten into the nitty gritty of the substantive part of the topical issues, and that only after this tour is complete will he conceivably be able to reach a conclusion on the gap between the two sides' positions.

Arens Doubts Baker Solutions

TA2104200591 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Defense Minister Moshe Arens doubts that Secretary Baker will find, in his next visit here, that everything has been agreed upon and all the problems have been solved. He believes the peace process in the Middle East is slow and tiresome.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1930 GMT on 21 April reports that Minister Arens said "he also believes we would be pleasantly surprised if, suddenly, in one more visit by Baker, it was found that all had been agreed upon by all sides."

[Arens is reported to have said further: "I have not met with Baker, but I do not feel there is a crisis, nor am I aware of new U.S. demands." He adds that he believes that "we must be careful of letting our expectations get too high."]

Minister Arens told our party affairs correspondent Shlomo Raz that the Alignment has held up the advancement of the peace process by a year because it caused the fall of the unity government.

Arens Notes Likud Unified Stand

TA2204052291 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0405 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Defense Minister Moshe Arens doubts that even after James Baker's upcoming visit there will be a breakthrough in the peace process. Addressing members of the Order of Jabotinsky in Tel Aviv, Arens said the only thing certain is that the Likud will present a single consolidated position on the peace process to the Americans. Our party affairs correspondent Shlomo Raz reports:

[Begin recording] [Raz] Moshe Arens was not prepared to state publicly his position on issues such as the composition of the Palestinian delegation and the format of the conference. It would not be right to relay messages to Baker through the Voice of Israel, he said. The differences of opinion within the Likud will not obstruct the negotiations, he said. At the end of the day, the Likud will present a unanimous position. As far as he is concerned, the internal differences of opinion are only natural at this point.

[Arens] The Likud is a big party encompassing a wide spectrum of opinions. It would be surprising and totally out of character if in the midst of political negotiations all Likud members and ministers were to think and say the same things. After deliberating and pondering the matter together, we probably will reach the consensus that will ultimately be presented.

[Raz] The defense minister is skeptical and finds it hard to believe that a breakthrough will occur as soon as the secretary of state returns to Israel.

[Arens] The peace process in the Middle East is by nature a very slow process. Of course, we would all be pleasantly surprised if following one more visit by Mr. Baker it suddenly transpired that there was all-round agreement. I, for one, would not count on it.

[Raz] The previous government fell when it was asked to reply to Baker's questions. Is such a development once again imminent? Are we being asked to answer questions that the Likud government is not prepared to answer in the affirmative?

[Arens] No, I do not think so. You must bear in mind that the previous government was one of national unity. The Alignment was part of it, and it was the one that brought about the government's fall. It accused the Likud of failing to promote the peace process, and actually it delayed the process by one year. It took a year before we were once again able to promote it.

[Raz] A year later, the defense minister believes there is still a long way to go. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Domestic Service in English at 0400 GMT on 22 April carries a two-minute recorded interview with Arens by Alan Ben-'Ami, in which the defense minister says that "he does not believe the U.S. secretary of state will give Israel an ultimatum when he returns here this week."

[Arens says: "I don't think that any negotiating process, certainly one that is directed at achieving peace, should be looked upon in an ultimative fashion. I think there must be the readiness to continue to invest time and effort, until such time as a satisfactory solution is going to be reached. The peace process in the Middle East is by its very nature a very slow, painfully slow process, and it requires a great deal of patience and persistence on the part of everybody."

[Asked whether the Americans are showing patience and persistence or pushing for quick answers and solutions, Arens says: "No, I think Mr. Baker is certainly showing patience and persistence. You can see he is coming back, time and again, to see what contribution he can make to come up with a formula that will be satisfactory to all the parties."]

Shamir, Levi To Brief Cabinet

TA2104044591 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0405 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir and Foreign Minister David Levi will report to the Cabinet today on the difficulties which surfaced in the talks with Baker last Friday. Political sources in Jerusalem fear that if Israel slams the door now the political process could be transferred to the United Nations and the Security Council and harm could be done to U.S. and European aid to Israel. Our political correspondent Arye Golan reports:

The more Baker and his interlocutors become involved in the substance the more difficult problems surface. What will be the character of the regional conference? The Arabs demand that it be put under UN auspices; Israel opposes this. Europe wants to participate; Israel does not reject this out of hand. Israel demands that the conference be a one-time meeting; the Arabs still want continuity. The United States is prepared to promise in writing that it would not impose solutions. The issue of a Palestinian delegation has not yet been resolved. Israel stands firm in its refusal to agree that an East Jerusalem Arab participate in the delegation.

Israel opposes any sort of linkage between the delegation of Arabs from Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip with the PLO. In the second round of talks with Baker, it was understood in Jerusalem that he too is opposed to PLO participation, but in the latest round of talks last Friday it transpired that while Baker avoided expressing his position, he made it clear that the Arab side is demanding that the Palestinian delegation be permitted to declare that it has received the green light from the PLO.

All those questions are still unanswered. Baker is trying to find a consensus, and Jerusalem is trying to find a way to avoid slamming the door shut while maintaining the government's principles. Nobody here is interested in having the process transferred to the United Nations and the Security Council. Nobody wants economic aid from the United States and Europe harmed. We should recall that in September the U.S. Administration has to decide on aid for immigrant absorption. Baker, for his part, has announced that if he does not receive satisfactory answers he will not be returning to Jerusalem in mid-week to continue the negotiations.

Arens Plans Nablus as Model for West Bank Towns

TA2104101091 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 21 Apr 91 p 1

[Report by Avi Bnayahu]

[Text] Defense Minister Moshe Arens plans to take action in Nablus' municipal and economic areas in an attempt to develop a leadership there and to make it a model for the other West Bank towns prior to possible political arrangements, 'AL HAMISHMAR has learned from senior defense sources.

The defense minister plans to take step in Nablus similar to those adopted in the Gaza Strip, which include easing economic restrictions and instituting tax reforms. In doing this, and by taking additional steps, Minister Arens plans to increase employment in the town and its environs and to transfer the running of trade, education, health, and other aspects of ordinary living to Palestinians not identified completely with the PLO.

Sources in Minister Arens' bureau confirmed that initial discussions have begun on the subject between the coordinator of government activities in the territories, the Army, and the minister's bureau.

Likud Calls for More Settlements in Territories

TA2204102091 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1000 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] The Likud Executive in the Knesset has called on the government to establish more settlements in the territories. The executive sent greetings to the residents of the new settlement, Revava.

Army Kills Two 'Terrorists' Near Kibbutz Dan

TA2204085091 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0500 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Two terrorists were killed last night in a clash on Israeli territory, about 3 km north of Kibbutz Dan. Our troops did not sustain any casualties. Our correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that the terrorist squad crossed the border fence on the slopes of Har Dov. An Army unit arriving on the scene opened fire on the two terrorists and killed them. Large quantities of weapons and ammunition were found on their bodies. They had apparently planned to stage a terror attack in Israel.

Tehiya: No Reason Yet To Quit Government

TA2204080391 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0830 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] At this point we have not yet seen a reason to make any moves, and Tehiya can remain in the government and continue to work within it, Minister Yuval Ne'eman stated upon emerging from a meeting the party's representatives held with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir. Minister Ne'eman told our correspondent Sarit Mikha'eli that the Tehiya representatives had explained their red lines concerning the political process to the prime minister. Deputy Minister Ge'ula Kohen told our correspondent that as far as the questions raised by Baker are concerned, their impression was that the prime minister would give an affirmative answer to Eretz Yisra'el only.

[Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 0800 GMT on 22 April notes that "Tehiya's Central Committee will convene in a few days to hear a report about the upcoming moves and to discuss the party's continued participation in the government."]

U.S. Secretary of State Baker Holds Working Visit

Arrives, Meets King Husayn

JN2004112791 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1100 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn received U.S. Secretary of State James Baker at the royal palace in al-'Aqabah this afternoon. The meeting was attended on the Jordanian side by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the prime minister, the chief of the Royal Hashimite Court, the political adviser to his majesty the king, and the foreign minister. On the American side, the meeting was attended by John Kelly, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs; Margaret Tutwiler, U.S. State Department spokeswoman; Dennis Ross, director of the Policy Planning Staff; David Welch, head of the Middle East Section at the U.S. National Security Council; and the U.S. ambassador in Amman.

Baker arrived in al-'Aqabah this afternoon on a short working visit to Jordan as part of his third tour of the region.

He was welcomed at al-'Aqabah airport by Foreign Minister Tahir al-Masri, the Ma'an governor, the al-'Aqabah administrative officer, high ranking officials in the governorate, and the U.S. ambassador to Jordan.

King, Baker News Conference

JN2004173291 Amman Domestic Service in English 1603 GMT 20 Apr 91

["Full recording" of joint news conference held by King Husayn and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in al-'Aqabah on 20 April—questions posed by unidentified reporters; King Husayn speaks in English]

[Text] [Husayn] I'd like to say how pleased I have been whenever [as heard] with my colleagues to welcome in Jordan Secretary Baker on this visit, and I believe although the time has been short, we have covered much ground. And I believe that this is a milestone in terms of the relations between our two countries that have grown and developed over many, many years, suffered maybe in recent times; but it is a relationship based on mutual respect, friendship, and a commitment towards a better future for people in this region and in the world, and to safeguard our mutual interests. We are very happy with the secretary's visit and with our talks; and we hope that this visit offers us an opportunity to begin again the intensive, frank, constructive dialogue that is so needed in the times ahead. We particularly view the fact that the United States—President Bush, my old friend, and the secretary—are so involved in the problems of the area, and particularly the Arab-Israeli problem, the Palestinian problem, as extremely encouraging. Needless to say we have always been committed to the cause of peace, a just and lasting peace in this region. And we hope that it won't be long before we see some real progress toward achieving this goal, which is so dear to all of us. Thank you very, very much indeed, and I leave it to you.

[Baker] Thank you very much Your Majesty, and first of all let me thank you for your superb hospitality in receiving me and my delegation here at your home on my first-ever visit to Jordan. I, too, Your Majesty, am very pleased with the talks that we conducted. I think that they were productive and very useful, and I, too, would like to see a strengthening of the relationship between the United States and Jordan, which has indeed suffered in the recent past. We had occasion, ladies and gentlemen, to have a very full discussion of the talks which I have had in Arab capitals and in Israel, and talks that I have had with Palestinians in the territories respecting the peace process, respecting the Israeli-Palestinian problem, and respecting the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. We also had an opportunity to discuss the bilateral relationship—the pluses as well as the minuses—and discussed ways in which we can in the future strengthen that relationship in an effort to try and bring it back to the status which it enjoyed in the past. Again, Your Majesty, thank you very much for your gracious hospitality. It's a pleasure to be here with you.

[Reporter] King Husayn, if I may. Your Majesty, a few years ago you said.... [changes thought] You virtually backed out of the U.S. peacemaking efforts. You were quoted as saying the United States is hopelessly one-sided in Israel's favor, and you virtually washed your hands of the process; and here you are back again. What's changed, or have you changed the view of the U.S. as a mediator, or have your needs changed?

[Husayn] The needs have not changed. The needs have always been for genuine efforts to achieve peace in this region that future generations can live with. The commitment has never changed, and nor has my position ever changed over the fact that the United States can contribute, if it chose to—and I believe it does, sincerely, more so than any in this world towards the resolution of the problems of this region, particularly the Palestinian-Israeli and the Arab-Israeli problems that have been with us. And it is my dream and my hope that somehow we can see an end to this sad and tragic chapter, and the beginning of hope, and the beginning of peace with all the opportunities that this offers to all concerned. This would be our contribution for those who follow us. And nothing has changed in that regard.

[Reporter] Your Highness, what confidence-building gestures towards Israel would Jordan be prepared to make, and what would you ask in return?

[Husayn] Well, I don't know. One positive element that one can point to is the fact that during a very difficult and dangerous time in this region, at least we were able to keep our two countries out of war.

[Reporter] That's history.

[Husayn] That is history, but recent history. In terms of the future, well, that is what we are talking about. What do we do? Where do we go from here? This is the first opportunity that I have had—at this level, certainly—to discuss this issue and discuss our progress so far and our hopes for the future.

[Reporter] Mr. Secretary, can you describe for us whether or not you heard some new views from the Palestinians today when you were discussing what they are willing to do? Is there something different that you heard this morning than in past meetings?

[Baker] John, we got into quite a bit more detail this morning than we had in past meetings. And I would refer you to their characterization of the meeting, because I don't want to put words in their mouth; but they indicated to me during the course of it that they thought it was a more extended, extensive, and fruitful meeting than past meetings. We discussed some of the problems. We talked about—just as I have talked about here today with his majesty—the importance of breaking the taboos that have existed for so long, prohibiting contact and discussion between Arabs and Israelis on the one hand, and between Israelis and Palestinians on the other.

[Reporter] Your Majesty, are you prepared at this point to declare that Jordan is ready to join a regional peace conference, sit at the table and negotiate, first in a group setting and then directly, with Israel?

[Husayn] I believe that the secretary was kind enough to refer to our talks and to refer to the question of taboos. Well personally, I have never believed, in all the years that have passed, that these taboos should be an impediment to making real progress towards the attainment of peace. I don't know what its name will be. Will it be a peace conference, will it be a.... [changes thought] This is still something that the secretary is involved in and many friends in the world are concerned with. But I beleive that we should move away from all the cliches. We should set our sights to ensure that this window of opportunity is not lost. When you have a situation where people, our people, our brethren, had been under occupation for so many years and they have on a regular basis had to deal with the Israelis and meet with the Israelis—I mean, what makes one a better Arab: to stay out of it and say that I am a better Arab because I am not involved?

The question is not a question of meetings, or contacts, or old taboos. The question is a question of responsibility in the times ahead. And I believe that if these are some of the impediments that have been there, they should be removed. People should talk.

There are—have been—stories and many suggestions about contacts and meetings. But nobody has ever been able to say that we gave in on Palestinian rights. The Palestinian dimension has to be addressed by the Palestinian people. We will support them.

We are talking now about the possibility of a conference. If they want to go it their own way, we are perfectly happy to support them. If they want to approach us to be a part of a joint delegation, if the matter begins with a conference, ends with a conference, fine; we will look at this. I think we have to be flexible enough, imaginative enough.

There has to be a process of education regarding peace, both on the level of the Palestinians and the Israelis, the Arabs and the Israelis. What does peace really mean? What does it offer this region in terms of the present and in terms of the future? So, believe me, we are looking very openmindedly at everything. And we will not let, if we can—and we will suggest to others—not to stick to old cliches and create obstacles. Let us join together in terms of trying to look at the future, and look at what our responsibilities are towards future generations and trying to find the solutions that as responsible people we are here to try to find, hopefully with the support of our people everywhere and the world as a whole.

[Reporter] Mr. Secretary, there are reports from the wire that Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states would not come to this conference which you are talking about. Is that true? If so, is Saudi Arabia refusing to come? And if so, what does that tell you about new thinking or a lack thereof in the region?

[Baker] Well, it is not because Saudi Arabia is refusing anything. I think there is a feeling on the part of the sometimes-called frontline states or the states neighboring Israel, that the issues in dispute are issues that affect Israel and those states and issues that affect Israel and Palestinians. And if you bring other Arab states to the table at the same time, where do you draw the line? Just Saudi Arabia? If so, why? So, I think you might want to check to see whether or not there is any.... [changes thought] If the wires you are referring to are suggesting that somehow there is a problem with that. Really, I do not think there is from any standpoint. But I don't think that—I don't want to speak, of course, for the Saudi Government—but I don't think they are banging on the door to get in and being denied entrance. And I don't think people are going to them and saying, please come in, and having them say no. It is not an issue.

[Reporter] Mr. Secretary, why was the idea of an international peace conference dropped for the regional conference, which bypasses the international forum of the UN?

[Baker] The primary reason is because we want to develop and create a process that will work. No one can impose peace in this situation. Peace will only come if the parties are determined to make it happen. It can't be imposed by the United Nations. It can't be imposed by the United States. It can't be imposed by the Soviet Union. It can't be imposed by a collection of all of those entities, organizations, and countries, and a whole lot more. It's only going to happen if there is a true desire for reconciliation on the part of the parties involved. And the term had become one—had become a buzzword,

frankly, that I would characterize falls within the definition, his majesty's definition, of cliche. I'm not suggesting he would agree with that, but that's the way I look at the term. It has developed into a cliche—international conference. It was anathema to Israel. It still is, the term. The term autonomy is a like term. That is a term that has developed a buzzword characteristic, and is anathema to Palestinians. So we don't use that term anymore, just like we don't use the term international conference.

[Reporter] Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

[Reporter] Excuse me, in your discussions with the Israelis, sir, what were their answers concerning the new settlements that are now uprising in the occupied territories and the West Bank?

[Baker] The answer is that the policy of this government of Israel is well known in this regard. The answer back from the United States is: We disagree with that policy. We see settlements as an obstacle to peace. The answer to your question, so, is: Let's get a peace process going, so that we can begin to take and get some action on problems such as these. We have in force today a boycott against Israel. Let's get a peace process going, and maybe we can do something about that. Maybe we can do something—I don't know whether we can or not—about settlements. But again, it's not something that's going to be stopped by fiat by the United States or the United Nations or any other group of countries. So we badly need a peace process.

[Husayn] Thank you very, very much indeed.

Baker's Visit Seen as 'Positive'

JN2104105391 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 21 Apr 91 pp 1, 19

[By the political affairs editor]

[Text] During the few hours James Baker and his delegation spent as guests in Jordan yesterday and after the American guest put all his ideas in the hands of His Majesty King Husayn, an atmosphere of balanced optimism prevailed over the talks.

The information AL-RA'Y has gathered on the atmosphere of optimism indicates that the starting point lies in the very real seriousness of Baker's program on a political settlement.

All the ideas that Baker is enthusiastic about are fundamental, constructive, and based on his acceptance of the fact that the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the Palestine question. This understanding, or more precisely this approach to understanding the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict brings Jordan closer to accepting American ideas on a settlement. It seems that Baker has accepted the list of Jordanian priorities with regard to the plan for settling the problem which focuses on alleviating the Palestinian people's suffering. Baker adds to his understanding the requirements the U.S. Administration deems as "musts" to spread an atmosphere of understanding in the region.

No decision was reached on the conference of which Baker speaks. Baker's ideas in this regard encompass a group of things. In one instance, his ideas are influenced by what the Palestinian delegation in the occupied territories said; in another, he almost accepts the Syrian understanding; on yet another occasion, his ideas are closer to the Israeli visualization; lastly, he agrees with Jordan's concept on an appropriate conference. In other words, Baker's visualization of the form, mechanism, and name of the conference is still not final. He is trying to reach a visualization through his shuttle visits to the region.

There are important points in what the U.S. delegation has said which certainly call for optimism over its substance or form of implementation. However, there are several precautions that hinder this optimism. They lie in the talk about a chronic conflict that is fraught with the risk that the United States may lack the ability to pressure Israel to pay attention, and Israel is the party on which any solution depends!!

Baker's visit to al-'Aqabah yesterday was positive, and has made up for some of the setbacks caused by the Gulf crisis between Washington and Amman. However, not all difficulties have vanished!!

Israeli Unit Advances Into Hasbayya District

NC2204124491 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Excerpt] In the occupied south, a 100-man Israeli infantry force advanced into the mountainous area east of Kafr Shuba village at dawn today. Assisted by helicopters, the force carried out a wide-scale combing operation that lasted for three hours. The operation follows the overnight confrontation between a group of Palestinian resistance men and the occupation troops in the northern part of the occupied territories along the road to the Golan Heights. The Israeli casualties in this confrontation, which lasted for approximately two hours, are unknown. The occupation sources reported that two resistance men were killed in the operation.

Today's Israeli advance operation coincided with shelling by the agent militia's tanks from their positions along the Hasbayya front in the villages of Libbaya, Yuhmur, and (Fijlaya) in western al-Biqa'. No casualties have been reported. The enemy aircraft dropped hundreds of flares to illuminate the area. Earlier, Israeli helicopters used their machine guns to rake the fields of Shaqra village. [passage omitted]

More on Israeli Activities

NC2104130491 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Israeli forces stationed in the Kawkaba hills used tanks, artillery, and machine gun fire in a wide-scale two-hour raking operation in the Kawkaba area, al-Ahmadiyah hills, and the Hasbayya sector last night, while helicopters dropped dozens of flares.

This morning, three Israeli tanks advanced 2 km into an area south of the al-Dahr hills, north of the occupied area. The tanks returned to their position after two hours.

Israeli vehicles were spotted on near the town of Haddathah today. The reasons for this violation are not known.

Western al-Biqa' Areas Attacked

NC2004125991 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Excerpts] According to reports from the south, Israeli helicopters flew over the towns of Haddathah and Bra'shit at 0800 today.

The outskirts of the town of Arnun came under 120-mm artillery shelling from the positions held by the Israeli occupation forces and the agents in Qal'at al-Shaqif last night. [passage omitted]

Israeli enemy forces escalated their attacks on the occupied southern areas during the past 24 hours. An enemy patrol has penetrated the area of western al-Biqa' north of al-Ahmadiyah hill. Another patrol shot at shepherds in the al-Habbariyah area, killing a citizen, 'Ali Ibrahim.

Israeli Fighters Overfly Sidon, Camps

NC1804122491 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 18 Apr 91

[Text] A formation of Israeli warplanes flew over Sidon and its camps at 1015 today.

Amal, SSNP To Hand Over Weapons 22 Apr

NC2004132991 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Our political correspondent reports that Defense Minister Michel al-Murr, who returned from Damascus today, has indicated that the al-Maradah forces have begun handing over their weapons. The defense minister added that he has received a pledge from the Amal Movement and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party [SSNP] that they will begin handing over their weapons as of Monday, 22 April.

Minister al-Murr will resume his consultations with the other militia leaders on the weapons issue. He is expected to brief the president and the prime minister on the outcome of his exchanges.

Disbandment Denied

NC1904100691 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0900 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Certain newspapers and radios carried statements attributed to Defense Minister Michel al-Murr to the effect that the militias will be disbanded by force between 2 and 3 May.

The Information Department at the National Defense Ministry affirms that such statements are completely baseless and unrealistic. The department adds that what the defense minister said before the parliamentary committees was that negotiations are taking place with the militias to work out a solution that would ensure the army's deployment without resorting to force. But the defense minister added: If such efforts fail, the army will be gradually deployed in implementation of the cabinet decision effective 2 May. If some militias resist this step, the army will use force to achieve its deployment.

Birri Rejects Disarming

NC2104134291 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Minister Nabih Birri has said that the weapons of the resistance fighters should not be handed over until Resolution 425 is implemented. He said that there is absolutely no connection between the weapons of the militias and those of the resistance.

In an interview with the newspaper AL-ANWAR, Birri defended the positive aspects of the militias. He said: We

were compelled to take up arms to achieve a fair system in Lebanon. Those who will join the state will do so, not to earn a living, but to correct the national course, the corrupt system of employment, and the prevailing ideas. He stressed that members of the militias should be given priority in state employment, and that anyone who opposes this will be impeding a solution. He added that the al-Ta'if accord will become null and void if a solution to the issue of the militias is not found. He said that if the Chamber of Deputies is impeding matters, then it should be held responsible. He added: We take pride in having responded to the solution that came from the deputies, despite its shortcomings, but they do not want this solution to succeed, although they are its architect.

Birri described the plan about municipalities and mayors as one that will cause sedition in every village. He said: We support any speedy peace so that we can dissolve the Chamber of Deputies and hold new elections.

PLO Stand Examined

NC2004084791 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Recent negotiations with the Palestinian side to reach a unified stand on the handover of weapons to the state seem to be back at square one. A glance at the Palestinian stands on the mediation efforts and negotiations is sufficient to determine that the Palestinian position still rejects the handover of weapons.

The talk about the non-existence of Palestinian obstacles to the Lebanese state's extending its authority, on which some people made bets and imagined that it would be easy, is in effect no more than verbal assurances that matters are proceeding positively and that knots will be untied by the concerned committees and mediators.

AL-DIYAR publishes today what is new about the Palestinian stands: That some Palestinian factions are still insisting on keeping their weapons inside the Palestinian camps, while other factions suggest the transfer of the weapons to al-Biqa' region. The PLO seems to have another view. It wants to link the issue of the Palestinian armed presence in all parts of Lebanon, which is being discussed with it, to the relations of Mr. 'Arafat and PLO leaders with Syria and Syrian officials.

Abu-Fadi Raji, Central Committee member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, has said: We consider the presence of the Palestinian rifle in the south as helping the state to implement Resolution 425. He added: It is useful to assert that our presence in Lebanon, particularly our military presence, is absolutely not linked to the Lebanese militias. He hoped that everyone would be sure of the responsive Palestinian stand, especially on the issue of cooperation in the south and on the implementation of UN resolutions, including Resolution 425. He said: Also, we hope a dialogue will be held as soon as possible to exchange views and reach a political understanding.

The INTERNATIONAL PRESS AGENCY [as heard] has cited informed sources as saying that the issue of handing over the Palestinian weapons has not yet been raised, because the Palestinian factions in Lebanon have told the legitimate authorities that they are not concerned with discussing any point conclusively. Thus, the Palestinian side considers that the absence of discussions with the PLO leadership in Tunis means that negotiations have not formally begun.

Buwayz on Militia Disbandment

NC1704210491 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 17 Apr 91

[Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has stated that the Palestinian factions cannot use Israel's occupation of the south as a pretext for rejecting the government's decision to disband the militias and hand over their weapons to the state. He said that if the Palestinian groups keep their weapons, the Lebanese militias will want to keep theirs as well.

In an interview with the newspaper AL-LIWA' to be published tomorrow, Buways added that Lebanon insists on being part of an international peace conference on the Middle East because it is directly involved in the issue. Lebanon's participation in the conference, he added, would not affect its truce with Israel. Buwayz called on the Security Council to implement Resolution 425.

Buwayz declared that the militias will not be compensated for their weapons when they turn them in because they were paid for with the people's money. He stressed that the handover of the weapons is a final and irrevocable matter. He noted that no specific deadline has been set for the event but said that a political deadline exists, and it is not important if it is delayed for a few days.

Ibrahim Denies Reports of PLO 'Obstacle'

NC1904073991 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] Muhsin Ibrahim, leader of the Communist Action Organization, resumed exchanges and consultations on the issue of Palestinian weapons. Yesterday he met with Minister of State Dr. Nazih al-Bizri, Nasirite Organization leader Mustafa Sa'd, and the PLO leadership in 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp. Ibrahim also met with Minister of State Walid Junblatt in al-Mukhtarah.

Ibrahim briefed them on the outcome of his talks in Tunis, Algeria, and Libya, as well as on his talks with the Lebanese officials. He also briefed them on the PLO's stand on the disbandment of militias, collection of Palestinian weapons, and the consolidation of the state's authority in all of Lebanon.

Ibrahim and Minister Muhsin Dallul are expected to visit Bludan in Syria where they will hold talks with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam.

During his meeting with the PLO officials in Lebanon, Ibrahim conveyed the position of the PLO leadership in Tunis. This position calls on the Palestinians in Lebanon

to react positively to any official Lebanese decision or stand, to avoid raising any topics, and to give the ongoing efforts for mediation a chance.

In his statement, Ibrahim expressed optimism about relations between Lebanon and the Palestinians. He pointed out that press reports of a Palestinian obstacle reflect the wishes of those who stand to lose from the national accord march. He denied that the Palestinians are obstructing the national accord march, adding that the PLO supports Lebanon's endeavors to ensure implementation of Resolution 425.

Communist Official Comments on Palestinian Presence

LD1304134891 Algiers APS in English 1049 GMT 13 Apr 91

[Text] Algiers, Apr 13 (APS)—"The solution of questions related to the Palestinian presence in Lebanon is conditioned by the resumption of the official and normal relation between the Lebanese state and the Palestinian state", the secretary general of the Lebanese Communist Labor Organization, Muhsin Ibrahim said in an exclusive interview to APS.

Muhsin Ibrahim, who paid recently a visit to Algeria during which he was received by President Chadli Bendjedid, pointed out that "it is possible, within the frame of this relation, to find necessary solutions to all unsolved problems between the two sides including the ones concerning the Palestinian armed presence".

The Lebanese official explained the necessity to establish a Palestinian-Lebanese dialogue by the fact that the (?al-Ta'if) agreement "did not deal in the best way with the questions related to the Palestinian presence". This constitutes, he said, "an important lack" which one should solve mainly that Palestinians have received promises in this way. [sentence as received]

Muhsin Ibrahim further said that the actions he is undertaking are known from the Lebanese authorities, which encourage them, and are undertaken in coordination with the majority of the Lebanese political directives.

As concerns the chances of success of his actions, Muhsin Ibrahim did not hide his optimism to see the mediation he is undertaking succeed. In this context, he said that Yasir 'Arafat grants a great importance to the implementation of Resolution 425 of the UN Security Council which provides for the Israeli withdrawal and the Palestinian armed presence which will be reexamined in relation with the implementation of this resolution.

The Lebanese official added that Yasir 'Arafat agreed that the struggle against the Zionist enemy be in the interest of the Lebanese national resistance which aims at liberating South Lebanon.

As concerns the future and security of Palestinian camps, particularly those situated in the South of Lebanon, Muhsin Ibrahim said all his discussions with Lebanese and Palestinian sides show the necessity to guarantee the security of the camps so that they can face up [as received] Israel and the Lebanese state. As Muhsin Ibrahim said, the situation is a particular one in the South and nobody will dare talk about a disarming of Palestinian camps. The Lebanese official added that the security of Palestinian camps as a practical measure remains a question open to fraternal discussions between Palestinians and Lebanese provided we shall manage to organize an official dialogue between PLO and the Lebanese authority.

He considers that "it is this relation which determines the national and political rights, the guarantees of security and social rights of Palestinians in Lebanon whose political expression is represented by PLO.

Asked whether Syria has a role to play in this Lebanese-Palestinian dialogue, Muhsin Ibrahim said Syria has a role in the way that it will facilitate the setting up of an official dialogue and define question which make the consensus between the two sides and spread the legitimacy all over Lebanon.

As concerns the position of the Lebanese national resistance vis-a-vis the implementation of the (?al-Ta'if) agreement, particularly concerning the disarming of militias, Muhsin ibrahim said the resistance cannot get rid of its weapons as long as there will be an Israeli presence in the south. The battle for the South still goes on, he said.

Muhsin Ibrahim put aside the possibility of a conflict between the resistance and the Lebanese authorities, as the battle for the implementation of the resolution ordering the Israeli withdrawal must continue at the same time as the resistance, he said. This resistance, Muhsin Ibrahim added, has been the subject of a parliamentary consensus as the agreement on national understanding provides for Lebanon to opt for the resistance against the Israeli occupier and reinforce this resistance.

Lebanese Forces Reportedly Continue Arms Sales

NC1804074291 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 0530 GMT 18 Apr 91

[Text] The newspaper AL-SAFIR reports today that the fourth consignment of weapons being sold to foreign parties by the Lebanese Forces weapons left the country the night of 13-14 April. Well- informed sources told the newspaper that the Lebanese Forces transported the weapons from al-Jurd to the coast near Juniyah and Jubayl aboard 24 vehicles, claiming that they were to be handed over to the Lebanese Army. When night fell, however, the weapons were unloaded onto waiting ships.

According to AL-SAFIR, the arms sales are organized by the U.S. Mafia. The paper added that the first consignment was sold to Soviet Armenia, while the second went to southern Sudan and the third to Somalia. The sources said that the Lebanese Forces have reaped $280 million in profits from the arms sales so far.

Press Views Baker's Middle East Tour

JN2104080591 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0445 GMT 21 Apr 91

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "There Can Be No Peace as Long as the Occupation Is Maintained," the newspaper TISHRIN says in the "TISHRIN's Voice" column that as part of the efforts under way for a just and comprehensive peace in the region, the U.S. secretary of state continues his diplomatic tour of Middle East capitals, the third in less than two months.

TISHRIN adds: It is very clear that the attainment of the desired regional peace should be based on UN resolutions, on the termination of the Israeli occupation of Arab lands, and on the restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people.

TISHRIN asserts that any policies pursued or efforts made outside the framework of these bases or principles will be doomed to failure. This is because what is built on firm ground remains firm and solid, whereas fragile accomplishments easily collapse, the paper adds. The paper goes on to say: There is no doubt that Israel's defiance of the will of the international community shows that it rejects peace. Moreover, by so doing, Israel is torpedoing the existing opportunities, as well as the efforts being made to find regional peace and proving that it entertains hostile and expansionist schemes and that it seeks to devour Arab lands.

Concluding its commentary, the paper says: As long as the Israelis talk and behave the same, it goes without saying that peace remains a too ambitious objective, that it requires strenuous and formidable efforts, and that Israel will be the party to be held solely responsible for the possible consequences of the failure of peace efforts, as this will set off an explosion in the regional situation, stirring things up.

Under the headline "The International Community and its Responsibilities," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says in one of its commentaries that the allegations and smokescreens behind which the Zionist entity has been hiding are crumbling with each passing day before the very eyes of the entire world, inasmuch as its policies, which are well-known to the Arabs and which have thus far failed to respond favorably to political and diplomatic moves for a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, have become public knowledge.

AL-THAWRAH goes on to say: Israel has not remained content with rejecting UN resolutions, despite the fact that the entire world community in general and the current U.S. Administration in particular have stressed the need for Israel to comply with these resolutions. Israel has also failed to endorse the international conference formula, which is the necessary mechanism for implementing international resolutions, as it is the best vehicle for finding reasonable and acceptable ways that would facilitate the implementation of these resolutions.

Concluding its commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: In light of this Zionist intransigence, the world community has been placed before its responsibilities toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. The community should take a unified and firm stand on the conflict similar to the one it took toward the Gulf events. The community should display a similar enthusiasm to consecrate international legitimacy, uphold the principles of international law, and implement UN resolutions. This is achievable only if Israel is forced to comply to the international community's will, respect international legitimacy, and abide by the UN Security Council resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine question.

Paper Says U.S. Credibility Being Tested

JN2004104191 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0845 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Damascus, 20 Apr (SANA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH says in its editorial today that the United States has a special responsibility to achieve peace in the Middle East and that Washington's credibility is now being put to an international test.

The paper notes Israel's devious policy toward the U.S. peace moves in the region. It says Israel had set preconditions before U.S. Secretary of State Baker began his tour. Through these preconditions, Israel seeks not only to reject international legitimacy and its resolutions, but also to portray itself as the victim and to divert world attention from resolutions 242 and 338, which are the basis of the peace process and of the U.S. moves to push the process forward.

Through its frantic efforts to convert the international conference into a regional one, the paper says, Israel is trying to impose its own terms on the peace process and to evade the implementation of the above resolutions by proposing alternatives unacceptable on both Arab and international levels.

AL-THAWRAH stresses the need for the United States to assume its responsibility as a superpower by dealing with Israel only as stipulated by international law and as decided by the world's legitimate institutions, especially the United Nations and the Security Council.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says U.S. credibility is now being put to an international test. Washington should be firm on implementing Security Council resolutions, and it should change its slackness toward Israel's actions.

For its part, TISHRIN writes that Israel's leaders do not want peace. In fact, adds the paper, they want to block the path of peace so that they can proceed with their expansionist aggressive program against the Arab region.

In its editorial today, the paper refers to statements by Israeli leaders on the eve of U.S. secretary of state's latest

tour of the region. It says that the statements are aimed at excluding the United Nations, the world community, and Europe from the peace process so that Israel can prolong its procrastination and maneuvers and undermine sincere peace efforts.

TISHRIN expresses confidence and belief that Syria will not stand by with hands tied with respect to this deceitful Israeli maneuver. It will put world community before its responsibility and will demand that the United Nations and the Security Council permanent member states respect their commitment not to use double standards in dealing with UN resolutions.

Concluding, TISHRIN says that the world community is indivisible, and all its resolutions should be implemented. It is high time the world said its decisive word and adopted measures to restore right and achieve peace in the region.

Press Stresses Importance of UN Role

JN2204064891 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0445 GMT 22 Apr 91

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Israeli Intransigence," the newspaper TISHRIN says: Based on the little information that has leaked out about the U.S. secretary of state's talks in Israel, it has become clear that the enemy leaders have met Baker's proposals with many impossible conditions that contradict the spirit and requirements of peace. Moreover, they did not respond to basic ideas about the peace conference or who should take part in it, and requested a period of time for consideration. Needless to say, the enemy leaders will exploit this period of time to undermine the entire peace process and spread an atmosphere of frustration and uncertainty in the region.

The paper adds: The Israeli leaders are holding to their scheme to divide the conflict and negotiate separate deals. Moreover, they demand the right to name the Palestinian delegation to the conference. In addition, they profess no intention to withdraw from the occupied territories or to trade land for peace.

The paper says: The desired peace conference must have clear features and objectives. Consequently, it should be based on a set of principles, headed by action to implement resolutions 242 and 338. This requires UN auspices, because the two resolutions were issued by the Security Council and embody the will of international legitimacy. The contribution of the United Nations and the permanent UN Security Council member states to the conference will consolidate the chances for a just, comprehensive, and strong peace and will provide international guarantees for the continuation of such a peace in the long term.

The paper says that recognizing Palestinian rights and withdrawal from the occupied territories are two basic conditions without which no peace of any form can be reached. Israel must be fully aware of that, bearing in mind that the international community as a whole views peace as impossible as long as the Israel occupation continues, with its ensuing brutal repression, which has so far failed and will fail in the future to crush the spirit of resistance.

On the same topic, the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: The enemy's response to Washington's efforts in particular and to statements made in various world capitals in general constitute clear rejection of peace and flagrant defiance of world public opinion and UN resolutions on the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state on their national soil.

The paper adds that peace means justice and compliance with the international will, not rebelling against it and disobeying it. Hence, it is the major responsibility of the United States, the EC, and all world states to achieve peace and justice through all appropriate means. It is absolutely unreasonable for Israel to maintain its abnormal position while the entire world is moving into an age that rejects injustice, wars, and destruction.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: If U.S. diplomacy has finally collided with Israeli intransigence, this is a matter that needs pressures, irrespective of their type, to compel Israel to comply with the international will and return to the Palestinian people their legitimate rights. Then, peace and justice can be achieved in one of the most dangerous hotbeds of tension.

Editorial Views Israel's Conditions for Peace

JN2004064891 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0445 GMT 20 Apr 91

[From the press review]

[Text] In an editorial headlined "What Was and What Is Deemed Correct," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Unmasking a black, brazen face, Israel openly rejects any peace that is not based on its own conditions, ignoring international legitimacy and its resolutions, especially Resolutions 242 and 338, which are the basis of the U.S. international move for a settlement.

TISHRIN [as heard] adds: We believe that the conditions laid down by Israel to Baker are only the first step in its attempts to evade peace. Consequently, we do not believe that the U.S. Administration is unaware of such tricks. The paper says that Israel also understands that the Arabs will reject these conditions and will accept nothing short of a just, comprehensive peace and short of the implementation of UN resolutions.

The paper concludes: U.S. credibility is now being put to an international test, with specific international resolutions and texts concerning peace in the region in hand.

Israel has no choice but to comply with these resolutions in a manner that does not give it wide room for maneuvers and tricks.

Article on Iraqi Regime's 'War of Destruction'

JN2004162191 Damascus AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 5 Apr 91 p 9

[Article by Muhammad Khayr al-Jamali: "The Third War of Destruction"]

[Text] So, this is the third war of destruction launched by the Iraqi regime against its exhausted people. After his first mad war against the Iranian revolution and the severe damage and huge losses that war inflicted on both the Iraqi and Iranian peoples and their economies and armies, Iraq's ruler launched his second suicidal war against the whole world through his invasion of Kuwait and his reckless, foolish, and risky policy, which has caused in Iraq, Kuwait, and the Arab nation a disaster unprecedented in the history of the world and its wars.

This is so because the war's negative repercussions have exceeded all imagination. Iraq's infrastructure has almost been completely destroyed; Kuwait has turned into a country on fire from one end to the other; the Arab nation has suffered a huge loss because of the destruction of Iraq and Kuwait as two fraternal countries in the Arab nation; and the Zionist enemy has gained many advantages by exploiting the Gulf war and the resulting pan-Arab wound that has weakened the Arabs.

Although one would think that the experience of these two wars would be sufficient for the Iraqi regime to understand its crime against Iraq's national interests and the higher pan-Arab interests, and to atone for its crime by stepping down and allowing the establishment of a national democratic rule in Iraq. This regime has preferred to remain in power and exploit this power to destroy what was not destroyed by its mad war against Iran and by its suicidal war against the international coalition, as if all the innumerable disasters and tragedies inflicted on the Iraqi people were not been enough to satisfy the Iraqi ruler's thirst for blood. Saddam Husayn is trying once again to drown the Iraqi people in a sea of blood in order to destroy what remained.

The Iraqi ruler's excuses for carrying out his premeditated crime against his people and their security and future are too weak to mislead anyone, or to conceal the fact that the third war of destruction being launched by Iraq's ruler against his people is the third and last phase of the premeditated plot that has always targeted Iraq's energies and its pan-Arab role in the Arab-Zionist conflict.

Needless to say, saving Iraq and its people from the tyrant's domination and destructive role will take place only through replacing the present regime with a national, democratic rule encompassing all the national and pan-Arab forces in Iraq. While the Iraqi people are entitled to revolt and save themselves and Iraq, all the honorable forces in the world, foremost of which are the Arab liberation movement forces, are duty-bound to support the Iraqi people's revolution, steadfastness, and power to put an end to a dictatorship whose crimes and brutality have exceeded those of any of the contemporary dictatorships.

Kuwait To Finance $250 Million in Projects

JN2104144891 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1415 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Doha—Badr al-Humaydi, chairman of the Kuwaiti Development Fund, has stressed that Syria and Egypt have special status because they supported the Kuwaiti side in the Gulf crisis.

In an interview with the Qatari paper AL-SHARQ published today, al-Humaydi said that over the next two years, the Fund will help finance four projects in Syria valued at $250 million, as well as many projects in other countries.

Al-Shar' Receives Egypt's Al-Baz 21 Apr

JN2104204491 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 2015 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' this evening received Dr. Usamah al-Baz, the Egyptian president's office director for political affairs. Egyptian ambassador in Damascus Mustafa 'Abd-al-'Aziz Mursi was in attendance. They talked about the Arab-Israeli dispute, the Palestinian question, and efforts to promote a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on UN resolutions.

Al-Baz Meets With Al-Asad

JN2204085591 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0840 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Damascus, 22 Apr (SANA)—President Hafiz al-Asad received at 1100 today Dr. Usamah al-Baz, director of the Egyptian president's office for political affairs.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and Dr. Mustafa 'Abd-al-'Aziz Musa, Egypt's ambassador in Damascus.

Iran

Foreign Minister Velayati Gives News Conference

Comments on U.S. Relations

LD2104095891 Tehran IRNA in English 0937 GMT 21 Apr 91

["Velayati Sees No Positive U.S. Move for Better Relations With Iran"—IRNA headline]

[Text] Tehran, April 21, IRNA—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati today said the U.S. has not taken any positive step towards creating a better climate in relations with the Islamic Republic.

"They are only talking about a better climate but in practice they have not done anything in this respect," he told a news conference when asked by a foreign reporter to comment on U.S. President George Bush's expression of willingness to improve ties with Tehran.

Asked by another reporter on Iran's conditions for resumption of ties with Iran [as received], Velayati said, "Here we are not talking about restoration of ties." He said if Washington really wanted to change the present climate between the two countries "they have to take some positive measures." As a clear sign of goodwill to this end, he cited the release of the frozen Iranian assets by the U.S.

On the Western hostages, the foreign minister regretted that the U.S. despite a claim by President Bush that "goodwill begets goodwill" had not reciprocated the goodwill of the Lebanese captors who released some of the hostages.

"They (the Lebanese Muslim groups) did their best but did not receive any positive response. I mean what the people of Lebanon did during those days was not reciprocated by the other side. That is the main reason for the deadlock in the hostage issue."

The Lebanese people were waiting for a positive step to be taken by the West, particularly the U.S., he said, adding that the Islamic Republic of Iran has no reservations regarding the release of the hostages. "We are rather very keen to get the release of all the hostages regardless of their nationalities," he said.

"We also have five hostages there (in Lebanon) in the hands of the Phalangists. We have strong indications that they are alive. And the Lebanese have several hundred hostages abducted by the Israeli Government to Israel. There are also some Western hostages. Let's have a very close and collective cooperation together to get the release of all the hostages regardless of their nationalities. This is how we can get out of this deadlock."

Velayati said one way to get out of the present deadlock was for the U.S. and other Western countries having an influence on Israel to secure the release of the Lebanese hostages, including Shaykh 'Ubayd, a Lebanese theologian abducted by Israeli commandos. "That," he said "would create a good climate for getting the release of all the hostages including the Westerners."

The foreign minister also rejected any linkage between U.S. aid for Iraqi refugees and Iran's help to secure the release of the Western hostages.

"It's very strange to us... because if the U.S. or any other country wants to help the poor Iraqi refugees, why should they mention such a condition. That has nothing to do with the Iraqi people. When we talk about helping the Iraqi refugees, we are only considering the humanitarian aspect of the issue."

Views Regional Security

LD2104115191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Excerpts] Foreign Minister Velayati, in an all-media interview with domestic and foreign correspondents this morning, said: The Persian Gulf crisis has inflicted many losses on the people and the countries of the region, a number of which have already become manifest, and some which will appear later. He added: Because the Islamic Republic of Iran [IRI] has constantly supported the establishment of peace and security in the region with the cooperation of all countries of the region, it was against the outbreak of this crisis since the beginning and made efforts to contain the crisis and prevent its further escalation.

Our country's foreign minister added: One of the outcomes of the Persian Gulf crisis was the uprising of the Iraqi people vis-a-vis the policies of their leaders, for which they were placed under pressure and tyrannized by their government. The result was the flight of two million Iraqis from their homes, the majority of whom took refuge in the IRI. So far around one million Iraqis have arrived in Iran, while tens of thousands of others are awaiting permission to enter our country. [passage omitted]

The foreign minister of our country, in reply to a question put to him by a foreign journalist, said: There have been no agreements between Tehran and Washington in respect to the flight of U.S. aircraft and helicopters carrying aid for the refugees over Iranian airspace. Mr. Velayati pointed out: Saddam continues to assault the Iraqi nation, while most countries have remained silent. Moreover, the granting of permission to the Iraqi Army to fly their aircraft and helicopters is an indirect green light for Saddam to continue his actions.

The foreign minister of our country added: We like to see the Iraqi people—be they Kurds, Shias, or Sunnis—living peacefully alongside each other; and it is the duty of the international community to work to that end. This is something with which we agree. If some Western governments seek to aid these people by destroying the

territorial integrity of Iraq, however, then we will disagree. If a region in Iraq is to be prepared for housing the refugees, we would prefer it to be under the supervision of the United Nations.

On the destiny of the Iraqi people, Mr. Velayati said: All Iraqi strata must have an equal say in the determination of their destiny. We respect their wishes, but will not interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq.

On the number of Iraqi aircraft in Iran, he said: The propaganda waged by Iraq in this regard has been baseless. The number of these aircraft is 22. Of course, some of them were downed by the coalition forces while entering Iran, and a number of them crashed in Iran. [passage omitted]

The foreign minister, at the end of the news conference, answered correspondents' questions on the security of the region, and said: The establishment of peace and security can only be achieved in the shadow of cooperation between all countries of the region, such as Iran, which is the region's biggest country. We saw the establishment of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, which was unsuccessful; and the Kuwaiti issue served to indicate the failure of that council.

Urges Aid for Refugees

LD2104124491 Tehran IRNA in English 1151 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 21, IRNA—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati today urged the international community to rush aid to over one millions Iraqi refugees in Iran as the Tehran government alone was not able to "fulill this heavy duty."

"There is no doubt that the whole human community is responsible for the maintenance of the Iraqi people, and should quickly and with all its might help them irrespective of the causes and elements of this disaster," Velayati said at a news conference here attended by foreign journalists.

"Some countries have felt a greater responsibility and have played a greater role. So far, 108 planes full of relief supplies have been sent to Iran. On behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraqi refugees, we thank them for their help. Of course, it should be noted that all these supplies are by no means proportional to the refugees' needs.

"We expect those who have played the main role in creating this crisis, to play a greater part in helping the refugees, which seems to be the minimum they can do."

Velayati said up to this morning, about one million Iraqi refugees have been cleared in to Iran through various border points and that several hundred thousand more are waiting to be permitted to cross the border.

Iran, he said, in addition to its own humanitarian role, has accepted to shoulder the burden of the refugees on behalf of the whole human community. In other words, he added, each and every country in the world, inspired by its humanitarian and international duty, should play its own part in helping the displaced Iraqi refugees, two thirds of whom are in Iran.

"Evidently, the Islamic Republic of Iran, by itself, will not be able to fulfill the heavy duty of the whole international organizations. Nevertheless, it has mobilized the people and the government to do the utmost."

He said the U.S. and other Western states had not helped enough the Iraqi refugees. He also said there was no obstacle in receiving aid from any country, even the U.S. which has no diplomatic relations with Iran.

On the idea of a "safe haven" for the Iraqi refugees inside Iraq, he said it was the task of the international community to take care of the matter. But on a similar attempt by the West, he said Iran agreed with the idea as long as Iraq's territorial integrity was not jeopardized. "If it does not harm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, that could be considered positively."

Velayati however ruled out the likelihood of establishing safe enclaves for the Kurdish refugees along the Iran-Iraq border.

On Anglo-Iranian ties and the current visit of the British Minister of Overseas Development Lynda Chalker to Iran, he said his meeting with the British minister in Tehran was positive. "We talked very frankly and sincerely." The main purpose of her trip, Velayati said, was to hold talks with Iranian officials on finding ways to send help to the Kurdish refugees.

The foreign minister said the two had also discussed mutual relations which he said had been strengthened over the past few months after both countries took positive steps. He said the trend of improving bilateral ties with Britian will continue.

Velayati said he had also discussed the Western hostages with the British minister and that she too agreed that the question should be resolved through a collective cooperation.

On a regional security plan, Velayati underlined Iran's important and undeniable role in such an arrangement.

He also confirmed that President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani will soon visit Turkey and Syria and he himself will pay a visit to Saudi Arabia in a near future.

Regarding Iraqi claims that over 100 of its planes were in Iran, the foreign minister said they were only 22. "Maybe they sent more but they were shot down by the Allied forces or crashed on their way here."

On relations with Iraq, he said the two countries had relations but "we have some other principles to observe as well." He said Iran had no intention whatsoever to intervene in Iraqi internal affairs "but we are very concerned about the fate of the Iraqi people."

"As our president said recently, the Iraqi Government should observe the will of its people. And according to our understanding the Iraqi people ask for democracy. We do hope that the Government of Iraq will respond positively to the desire of its people. We too support the Iraqi people's desire for democracy but it does not mean we are interfering in their internal affairs."

Velayati who was speaking in English, said in conclusion of his remarks, that "we think the people of Iraq will finally win to get democracy in their country."

Papers Criticize Motives for Kurdish Safe Haven

LD2204100291 Tehran IRNA in English 0928 GMT 22 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 22, IRNA—Two morning dailies Monday editorialized on efforts to create a safe zone for the Iraqi Kurds in northern Iraq with the Persian daily ABRAR saying that it is unlikely that the regional Muslims will agree to the move and KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL stating that despite its humanitarian appearance, the move is of "alarming dimension."

The Persian daily described the move as fresh attempts to strip the regional states of their identity, adding that its implications will go far beyond the safe haven and affect those who consider themselves immune to its consequences. The intention is to make Israel completely safe and secure.

The Iraqi regime which should have been overthrown at the end of the Persian Gulf war remained in power and the U.S.-led allied forces kept those areas in Iraq which suit their purpose.

The Baghdad regime stayed in power because its fall would disturb the regional balance of power leaving no hopes for resolving the Arab-Israeli problem, ABRAR said.

The allied forces gave the green light to the Baghdad regime to suppress the people and launch its genocidial measures with the Baghdad regime signing one of the most humiliating agreements ever on the orders of the U.S. in order to open the way for the new joint U.S.-British plot—creation of the safe haven.

Under the latest scheme, control of the Muslim nations and plunder of their wealth and resources will be a much easier task. Furthermore, new borders will be created with each tribe being confined to a big camp under the pretext of granting them their identity.

The claims that creating safe haven is a move to stop massacre of people is totally invalid because the massacre could have simply been stopped by removing those behind it. What masterminds of the plan are after is "a Middle East in the new era of the world order," said the paper.

ABRAR in conclusion warned that the U.S. and Britain are ready to swallow up the Middle East and even if the unified Europe agrees to the formation of this new political map, it will have no share of it.

"The U.S.-French-British drive to set up Kurdish 'sanctuaries' brings to mind the secret and infamous Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 which was the instrument that oversaw the break-up of Ottoman Empire, spawned Iraq and led eventually to the British drawing the Iraq-Kuwait border that was a factor in the last war, i.e., denying Iraq access to the Persian Gulf," said KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL.

The agreement was carried out under British mandate that led to the disappearance of Palestine.

Although at first glance the plan seems a humanitarian effort, the daily said it is "naive" to think that the U.S. and its allies did not have in mind a much longer term meddling in the area.

With this plan, it seems that the U.S. and its allies want to "deflect criticism that they betrayed the Kurds, keep Saddam Husayn in place and maintain his menace as a way to prop up both the Sabahs and Sa'uds (thereby thwarting political pluralism) and give themselves a pretext for a good long stay in Kurdistan to foment who knows what under the fig leaf of Kurdish protection," wrote the English daily.

'Danger' Seen

LD2004110191 Tehran IRNA in English 0857 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 20, IRNA—Two Iranian dailies Saturday editorialized on creation of a "safe haven" in Iraq for millions of hopeless Iraqi refugees and called for cautious handling of the issue.

The Persian daily JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI said that the plan is of major security problem for the entire region and Iraq's neighbouring countries and called for a serious, effective and careful investigation of the issue.

The paper wrote that the U.S. proposal had not been motivated by humanitarian reasons because the U.S. has no respect and value for human beings and their rights. The U.S. indiscriminate bombardment of the Iraqi residential areas during the Persian Gulf war shows the degree of the U.S. respect for human beings.

The U.S. "scheme to disintegrate Iraq" is gradually becoming clear and the whole picture is falling into place, it said, adding that the proposal may gain more support in later stages.

It warned that the scope of the safe haven may gradually expand, posing a major security risk. "The flagrant military intervention of the U.S. in northern Iraq is to create a safe zone to form the nucleus for a 'second Israel' in the region."

The move will make the national security of the neighbouring countries further vulnerable and will be ensured by a new round of chaos, arms race and disorder in the region.

Stressing that insecurity in the region will be detrimental to all regional countries, JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI called for joint efforts to counter conspiracies of arrogance launched under the disguise of humanitarian efforts.

Meanwhile, the English daily TEHRAN TIMES said that it was better if the "safety zone" plan was carried out under the auspices of the U.N. and neutral countries.

"As for the present, the Iraqi regime's persistence in ignoring political demands and its unwillingess to stop down from the seat of power will mean that these safety zones under the supervision of the multinational forces can continue to exist endlessly until there is a change in the political scenario there."

The paper said that this can serve as a continuing danger and an obstacle in restitution of peace and stability both from military and political points of view in the region.

Referring to the unstable situation of the present Iraqi regime, it wrote, "In this context one cannot help but assume that the objective behind any foreign intervention in the region in question will aim at imposing some form of its version of much publicized democracy, or to impose political reforms on patterns that can only be at variance with the political will and views of the people of Iraq."

Rejecting any imposed political setup, TEHRAN TIMES said that this will intensify the political tension between the present government and the Iraqi (?people).

Commerce Minister on Cost of Aid for Kurds

LD1904133891 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] The country's commerce minister, after visiting Iraqi refugee camps in the western part of the country, gave an interview to a correspondent of the Central News Unit. He described the organization and housing of the refugees as good, and added: Our country's self-sacrificing people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran have made their best and utmost efforts to provide the Iraqi refugees with their requirements, and will continue to do so. The requirements of these victimized people are by far greater than that which has been placed at the disposal of the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran by international and foreign aid organizations. Mr. Vahhaji added: The cost of caring for the more than 1 million Iraqi refugees now in Iran, based on preliminary estimates, amounts to at least 20 billion rials a month. Against this amount the volume of foreign help has so far been negligible.

Editorial on Scope of Iraqi Refugee Issue

NC1904190091 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 14 Apr 91 p 1

[Editorial: "Iraqi Refugees—An International Problem"]

[Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. The homelessness of two million Iraqis is not the problem of one country or an issue limited to one particular region, but is an international problem.

The issue of Iraqi refugees should be assessed from two aspects. First is the humanitarian aspect of the issue. The homelessness of two million women and children, young and old, and the hardships inflicted on them are not a minor issue. We cannot ignore the fact that their lives are at stake.

The Islamic Republic of Iran understands this aspect and has, therefore, opened its borders so that it can accept a large number of the refugees and ease their burdens. Who does not know that the transfer of over 800,000 refugees to another country, the borders of which are overflowing with refugees, is a difficult task which will definitely affect the pace of a country which is itself in the throes of reconstruction.

This accentuates the second aspect of the problem of the Iraqi refugees; that is, the political and economic aspect. International assistance (assuming that it is sufficient) might be able to eliminate the food, living, housing and medical problems to a certain extent for the refugees. From the political point of view, however, the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis to their neighboring countries should not be considered a normal or permanent phenomenon.

The problems of countries and governments can never be solved by people fleeing. If the war against Iraq is considered the point at which the tribulations of the Iraqi people began, we should also add that the UN-endorsed oil war set Iraq and the region on fire. More than 30 countries united to resolve the Iraq-Kuwait dispute in whatever manner they wished. The problems of the people of Iraq should also be resolved by a similar international effort and in particular with the efforts of the United Nations.

In its capacity as an international authority for recourse, the United Nations should not remain indifferent to the fate of the Iraqi people, especially the two million Iraqi refugees. The presence of UN teams in Iraq can create conditions conducive to resolving the problems of the Iraqi refugees in cooperation with the Iraqi Government.

The Iraqi refugees have left their hearths and homes and have been rendered homeless. International effort is needed to return them to their homeland. The Iraqi people should not have been driven out of their homes or their true homeland of Iraq.

West's 'Open Support' for Saddam Discussed

LD2104182191 Tehran IRNA in English 1642 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Tehran, April 21, IRNA—A Persian daily Sunday called for a minute investigation into the West's open support for Saddam's massacre of Shia muslims in southern Iraq and its crocodile tears for the Iraqi Kurds.

The morning daily JOMHURI-YE ELAMI in its editorial entitled "Iraq's Security Must Be Ensured Through Solution of Problem in Baghdad" asked the Islamic Republic Government to attract the attention of world gatherings to the issue by briaging forth the matter at international organisations and especially at the Security Council. All those who masterminded the safe haven plan and all NATO members are well aware that the root cause of Iraq's insecurity lies in Baghdad and insecurity will continue to exist in that country as a decisive phenomena as long as this root has not been eliminated. It said the Western idea of Iraqi war crimes and the need to put Saddam on trial under these conditions were all a propaganda attempt to cover up military activities of NATO in north Iraq.

"These two plans, that is the necessity of Saddam's military trial and creation of safe havens are in open contrast with each other because if the Allied forces really intend to try Saddam, they can eliminate the roots of insecurity in Iraq and therefore there is no need for the creation of safe havens in a part of that country."

UK Minister Denies Aid, Hostage Linkage

LD1904154991 Tehran IRNA in English 1356 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] London, April, 19, IRNA—Britain's minister for overseas development, Lynda Chalker, after the setback caused by comments she made Thursday, has been forced to eat her words regarding a link between humanitarian aid to Iran to cope with Iraqi refugees, and the issue of Western hostages in Lebanon.

After receiving advice from the UK Foreign Office, which received a strong complaint from Iran's charges d'affaires in London on Thursday, Chalker, rushed to reporters to insist that the UK sees no linkage between the two issues. She was speaking from Turkey on the first leg of her trip to Turkey and Iran.

The UK Foreign Office also sent advice to Britain's charge d'affaires in Tehran, to cool down the problem caused by Chalker's comments. David Reddaway denied reports that Chalker would discuss the Western hostages with Iranian officials. He claimed her visit to Iran aimed only at holding talks on the status of Iraqi refugees. It is not clear now whether Chalker will meet with Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati as was originally intended.

The implication of her Friday correction was that her remarks on Thursday were for domestic British consumption. Remarks she made Thursday before embarking on her trip, indicated that Britain's offer of aid to Iran for Iraqi refugees, was conditional on guarantees of help from Iran in obtaining the release of Western captives in Lebanon.

Her remarks also revealed that the British Government was intent on politicizing the humanitarian Iraqi refugee issue and to capitalise on the plight of Kurdish and Shia Iraqis. Their misery was caused by the West's "freeing" of Kuwait, which left Saddam Hussein in power in Baghdad and gave him a green light to massacre any Iraqis who followed the American request to rise up against him.

On TV-AM [UK television program] on Thursday she explicitly said that there would be no British help for Iran if Tehran refused to help Britain. The British Government has so far only sent two planeloads of aid to Iran for Iraqi refugees and gave no indication, prior to Chalker's statement, of the reason behind their reluctance to help the Iraqis who fled to Iran.

After her TV-AM interview on Thursday, Chalker had told reporters she would deliver a message to the Iranian foreign minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati, from the UK foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd, and that she had a very special message to the Tehran government "for those innocent British and other people held in the Lebanon".

She added that the message was "we are going to help you with the problems you have. Please help us bring home those hostages who should never have been taken and kept for so long".

IRNA understood that the UK's under secretary for Middle East affairs, Patrick Fairweather, tried hard to convince the Iranian charge d'affaires, Mr. Shamseddin Khareqani, in a lengthy discussion, that Chalker's remarks on Thursday were misinterpreted and that Britain sees no linkage between the two issues.

The Foreign Office in London privately indicated to some British newspapers that the UK's foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd, is not happy with what Chalker said and that he "would wish to distance himself from her words".

The Foreign Office stressed that Chalker's comments did not reflect Hurd's letter to Velayati and that his message did not link aid with the Lebanon hostage issue overtly. But they have acknowledged that his letter does refer both to aid and the Lebanon hostages.

Speaking from Turkey on BBC Radio Four on Friday morning, during the first stage of her trip to assess the Iraqi refugee situation, she said that although she will raise the issue of Lebanon hostages during her visit to Tehran, which begins Friday, the main reason was to help Iran with aid for the refugees.

Chalker, who will be the first British Government minister to visit Iran for 13 years, said the two matters are "quite separate" from each other, but that she "couldn't go to Tehran without" mentioning the Lebanon hostages.

The UK's opposition Labour Party spokeswoman on foreign relations, Ann Clwyd, detailed all of Iran's needs with regard to Iraqi refugees at least five times on television and in the UK Parliament, following her own visit to Iran. But despite Clwyd's graphic descriptions of the misery of refugees in Iran, due to the non-existence of Western aid, Chalker claimed that she did not know what Iran's needs were.

According to the UK's "INDEPENDENT" on Friday, her Thursday remarks "caused a serious rift with Tehran" on the eve of her visit to Iran, which provoked the protest from Iran's charge d'affaires.

The paper said that "unconfirmed reports from Iranian sources said Tehran was considering cancelling Chalker's visit unless it received a formal apology" from the British Government. But it added that the Foreign Office in London claimed it had "received no threat from Tehran that the trip could be cancelled".

In her BBC radio interview from Turkey, the UK's minister for overseas development suggested that the relief effort could take several months, rather than a few weeks. She will tour mountain camps on the Turkish-Iraqi border by helicopter, before flying to Iran later on Friday.

Majles Deputy Resigns, Criticizes Interior Minister

LD2104134191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Second Program Network in Persian 0450 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Remarks by Deputy Fazel, representative of Hamedan, at the Majles session in Tehran on 21 April—live]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] For a long time, due to the divisions, different lines, and unkindness of certain officials of the province, I kept calm and I was patient. After witnessing the extremely unfair budget distribution in Hamedan Province, however, I walked out of the Planning Committee session yesterday afternoon, as did the honorable governor of Hamedan.

I have decided to resign. Last night I prepared myself for my last speech.

Let me say this: In the final moments, the honorable interior minister—who pays no attention to the letters and messages of deputies—should not think that these positions and posts are for useless speeches. [passage omitted] Every day he pays less and less attention. Especially after the centralization of the security forces, he has even more power [words indistinct]. Although I very much like and respect the right honorable Mr. Jahromi, the esteemed governor of Hamedan Province, I have complaints to make with regard to some of his deputies.

Unfortunately, the Interior Ministry does not pay attention to this matter, and it will not do so. This is due to mismanagement.

I have resigned and I am going. I have resigned my post as a deputy. But I feel sorry for you dear representatives. [some deputies voice their disapproval] Let me continue. What are you going to do with the ruling climate at the Interior Ministry? Especially since he [interior minister] never comes to the Majles. He does not let most of the deputies know what is going on. [passage omitted]

Musavi-Ardebili Delivers Friday Prayers Sermon

LD1904163591 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1130 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Friday prayers sermon delivered by Ayatollah Musavi-Ardebili in Tehran on 19 April—recorded]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] One of the good deeds, deeds which are eye-catching, is what you have done to support and to provide refuge, at the cost of enduring sacrifices, to the destitute people from Iraq. They are Muslims; they are our guests; they have endured tyranny. It was a very good gesture by Iran to open the borders to them, to welcome them, to give them refuge. The people showed generosity and a spirit of selflessness, befitting only a committed Muslim, as they hosted the refugees, despite the ugly deeds by the international quarters, who were refusing even to talk about it. Later, when they seemingly came around to showing kindness, they began merely talking about it. We see nothing in the way of help. All right, let there be no help. What we have done at home is very valuable. Let there be no help from abroad. [passage omitted]

We can help as much as we can; we give them whatever we have. But, O you international organizations, you are supposed to have honor; you are supposed to be part of humanity; you are human beings. What you did was very good, whether or not the international outfits help you. [passage omitted]

On the subject of my first sermon, it is this: What are we to do at this point in time? Many years have passed; we have done a great deal and carried out our responsibilities. God willing, we have had achievements. Now, at the onset of the new year, what is our duty? Do we have any duty? I will explain. We do have duties to perform as we are living beings. Of course, one may feel that, since the victory of the revolution, we have done what was expected of us. We have offered our lives, blood, and everything we had. Now, we must begin to enjoy the fruits of our previous efforts. Do we still have to go on feeling responsible and putting in a lot of effort? Must we go on constantly working hard? It is now somebody else's

turn, because we have done what we can. That is a mistaken thought. [passage omitted]

The world of Islam today is afflicted with calamities; it is sad to think about. Afghanistan is in trouble, as you can see. Pakistan is the same, especially with its (Sepah Sahabeh); India has the problem of mosque and Kashmir; Sudan is in trouble; Egypt, Jordan, and all others likewise. Look at Lebanon and Palestine. Worse than all of them is Kuwait. Worse than that is Saudi Arabia. Worst of all is Iraq. That is the world of Islam. The world of Islam, the land of Islam and the Muslims, are now burning in flames. Yet, I cannot say that the situation cannot get any worse. When calamity strikes, one sees that it is possible to have worse than worst. Look at Kuwait: Yesterday, it was the attack by that antihuman and anti-Islamic element who wreacked destruction, murder, and plunder. That was Kuwait yesterday. Today, apparently she has her good day; she has been seemingly saved. But, with whose hand? She has been saved by the U.S. hand. Her good day is now, when she has found a master; she has been given refuge by the enemy; she will have good days, but under the U.S. shadow. There is also Saudi, which is supposedly the servant of the two holy mosques and such and such. Look at her situation. She, too, is now under the shadow of the master. Of course, the master was already there, but it was different. Now, the master has physical presence; it has come to roost.

He has brought wine and women. When he wants to do a big favor and take notice of the regulations, he tells his soldiers: Take care a bit during the month of Ramadan; don't be too lecherous in the streets; don't upset the Muslims. This is the greatest favor that this newly arrived master bestows on the Muslims, on the center of the muslims.

This coward in Iraq has brought this about, all this massacre! There is no news. What is going on over there? What happened to the sources? What happened to the schools? What became of the seminarians? What became of the Iranians? One day they say: We executed them. One day they say: We arrested them. We will not mention the Muslims now, since as soon as we say Muslim, they say: They are fundamentalists; they must be destroyed. All right, we won't mention Islam; we have Iranians over there. Thank goodness this is the international norm. When Iraq took Kuwait, all the countries whose citizens were in Kuwait, be they one or many, raised their shouts to the skies. What about Japan, the Germans, the British, the French or the Americans? We say: What about the Iranians? We have no news of the Iranians residing over there. The Iranians whom we have over there are no ordinary people; they are academic personalities. We have Grand Ayatollah Kho'i, the eminent source of emulation of Shiis over there; we have Ayatollah Sabzevari; we have others. Forget the sources of emulation. As Iranians, we have a right to ask: What happened to the Iranians over there? Japan said: What about the Japanese? We say: What about the Iranians? Today, from this holy podium, as an Iranian citizen, I shout aloud. I say: With the fires that are burning over there, we seek the safety of the Iranians; we want information about them; where are we to go? To the United Nations. Why did they then rain fire upon Saddam? This is what Saddam does! You saw what he did to them; but not like this. He acted much weaker toward them. We must feel responsible; we must feel duty-bound. Apart from the international norm, apart from our humanitarian duties, we have Islamic duties, we have religious duties. We must not shirk our duties. If we were to think of ourselves, think of myself, my life, my food, my welfare, and my recreation, what would happen to the revolution? Where would the revolution go? [passage omitted]

In the second sermon, I refer to two subjects so that I don't take too much of your time. The first subject is a reminder. At the beginning of the revolution, in the fervor and joy of the revolution—to a certain extent spontaneously and to a certain extent by design—some things happened that were very good. I remember that some of these things were thought about by some people who used to meet and publicize. Some of those things were brought to the people as an innovation. Some were proposed by the people and put into practice; if they were appropriate, they would be supported. Some of those things seem, at least, to lose their color gradually. Maybe this is natural. Some time has passed, and the fervor and joy has somewhat abated and lost their hue. Those are the achievements of the revolution, and this is a pity. They automatically solved our problems by 10, 20, 50, 60, or 70 percent. If they lose color, God forbid, once again problems will arise. Then we must sit down and see what we can do with those problems. In short, let us safeugard those Islamic values, which we really have attained as values, no matter how we attained them. Let us not allow them to be destroyed.

One of them, one that comes to mind, is Islamic dress. [passage omitted] Thank God, after the revolution we had a rennaisance. The veil arrived; the overall [rupush] arrived; the Islamic dress arrived. Makeup was put aside. The situation became wonderful. I don't want to say that the government [nezam] did not seek this, but the people were after it more. It was wonderful.

This is an Islamic issue. Gradually, the summer is approaching, when sometimes the situation takes an unpleasant turn in some towns, hamlets, and the mass media. This trend started some time ago, and much has been done to curb it.

Unfortunately, the works were not pursued or they were pursued but without achieving any results. Perhaps they were not pursued scientifically; hence, their roots were not discovered. I do not know. It seems, however, that we are losing this achievement of the revolution. Some say that the situation has become much worse, worse than in the Pahlavi period, but we do not accept such allegations. These are exaggerations, and wrong. Evidence has appeared. Preliminary signs have appeared in

various corners, streets, roads cars, and other places. If Muslims do not take some measures now, then it may be too late. If we fail to cure this problem now, then it will no doubt exacerbate next year, and it will be exacerbated even further in two or three years. Do what you think should be done, be it culturally—which, in my opinion, is the correct solution—be it judicial—which I am against since judicial measures could be countereffective. As for other measures, practical measures, whatever measure is needed, you should begin now, otherwise the problem will worsen every day.

The second issue concerns that of a simple lifestyle. In the wake of the revolution, we were faced with a predicament. We were faced with some youth, girls, boys, families; whose weddings, wedding nights, funerals, and their entire lifestyle was, indeed, astonishing to us. Their wedding ceremonies then became simple. Their bride money decreased; the unnecessary burdensome tasks were lessened; the dresses, houses and lifestyle became simple. A simple life style was one of your mottos. [passage omitted]

The third issue concerns the balancing of wealth. You used to pontificate vehemently about those peaks of wealth accumulated from illegal possessions and those pits of poverty in which the poor had faced such or such a faith, in which they are living without food or water or clothing. We must strike down those peaks and fill those pits.

Perhaps we have struck them down them, filled the pits, and smoothed the paths. Perhaps that is it. That was the situation. Or, perhaps they are now busy doing other things, and, hence, do not listen so much. The possibility exists.

The fourth value is that of closing of the gaps. To avoid using the phrases used by others, I refrain from using the term social classes. One of the points we stressed was that of closing the gaps. If someone owns a car, someone else should own a Peykan. You may well say: Isn't Pekykan a car? By God, I do not know. Once, they used to say that. They used to say: Didn't you have money to buy a car and bought a Peykan instead? Let us say, if someone owns a Peykan, the other should own a motorcycle, and if someone owns a motorcycle, the other one should own a bicycle. If there is one who doesn't even have the money to buy a ticket, while another owns the latest model of a car, then we say: This kind of lifestyle is not an Islamic one. Brothers, by God, these were the values which raised people's hopes, values which raised people's interests. If the people did not break their backs under the heavy strain of that eight-year imposed war... [changes thought] I have said on many occasions that one of our prides which I believe to be unprecedented in the world is that very war. [passage omitted]

Close the gaps. Do not allow the gaps to be widened. The widening of the gaps could spell disaster. We should all stride together toward achieving comfort. With one person in comfort and another in poverty, there would be unpleasant consequences.

The next issue concerns the Western culture, the general culture taught in universities. Since I have my second point to discuss, I cannot elaborate on this one, since then I will not have time to discuss that second point.

Now, I come to the second issue that I want to talk about. During Nowruz holidays, an occasion arose, and I went to Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, in the Soviet Union. Azerbaijan is a country, a republic—we call it a province, but they have a president, representatives, ministers, etc.—with a Muslim population of 7 million Twelver Shiis, very similar to our own Azerbaijan. Half of Mohan is on this side, the other half is in the other side; half of Astara is on this side, the other half is on the other; half of Pilesevar is on this side, the other half is on the other; a father is on this side, his son is over there. Families have been split into two. In our Azerbaijan, the people are Muslim, Shii, Twelvers. They like Islam. It is the same over there.

Let me say that, when we entered Nardalan mosque—I was accompanied by six learned persons, I was not alone—when we entered the mosque, they started shouting slogans. They don't speak a word of Persian. They learned the slogans from this very same Friday prayers: Welcome to the Imam's Friend; Musavi, We Obey You; Khamene'i, Khamene'i, I Don't know What [as heard]; As Khemeyni Said, Khamene'i is the Leader, He is the Prophet's Heir. They are just like our own slogans, and they were saying them in Persian. When we went there, our friends said: God is our witness; when we saw this place, we recalled Imam's arrival in Behesht-e Zahra. This was the enthusiasm, not for me, it was for Iran, the revolution, and Islam. When it ended, a few of them came to us and asked: What will you answer to God? We want to remain Shii with the same enthusiasm and fervor. We want to remain Muslim. Don't you say Takbir, God is great, Khomeyni is the leader? They say the same thing, and then they say: Death to, I don't know, America, Death to the Soviet Union. I told them quitely: We don't say Death to the Soviet Union anymore. They said: No, we say it!

Yes, these are Shii! They are looking toward you! This is their faith. [passage omitted] The head of their philosophy university [as heard] came to me and said: We read one-dimensional philosophy, materialistic philosophy based on Marxism-Leninism. That has been discredited. If you have anything in Islam to replace it, then come, we will organize sessions. Talk to us; we will replace it. I said: We have something, I think we can use to replace it. [passage omitted]

I then went to Uzbekistan. It is another republic with a population of 21 million, while the population here is 7 million. They are Shiite, and they Sunni. The situation there was good compared to that in Azerbaijan. [passage omitted]

There are 500,000 Iranians there about whom we knew nothing. There are 120,000 in Tashkent. They went there 100, 150, or 170 years ago. They are fourth, fifth, sixth,

second, or third generation. They are there; they are Iranians; they are still proud to be Iranian; they hold very sensitive posts; they fast; they have mosques and prayer stones; they don't let their daughters marry non-Iranians and don't marry non-Iranian girls. [passage omitted]

I will say something about Azerbaijan. They want to make it Wahhabist. While we were there, 10 Turkish clergymen came over from Turkey, on Saudi money, to propagate Wahhabism. Turkey has said to them: We will build you 50 mosques; we are anti-Armenian, and so are you, and things like that. All we want from you is that your script should be Latin and not Naskh or Nasta'liq. So far, they have been using cyrillic. Now that they want to change, they say: Use Latin, so that you do not revert to your origins. There are certain issues there that perhaps it would not be appropriate for me to talk about here.

There are 7 million Shiites there. They are waiting for help, for schools and print shops to be built, for tourists to go there; for them to be allowed to come to Mashhad on pilgrimage and for Iranians to go there. It would take little effort to cater for the 7 million. Of course, I have briefed the authorities on this. They are aware of the situation, whether sufficiently or not. We will have to wait and see.

They said to us: Extend our greetings to the Iranians. Tell them we are your brothers. We like you. We were prepared to go to war on your side and sacrifice our lives. But, our circumstances were such that we were not able to.

I told them: I will pass on your greetings.

We gave them some encouragement on your behalf. God willing, as the honorable Iranian authorities have promised, they will talk to them, and if they resolve their small differences, we will look after 7 million Shiites there. [passage omitted]

More on Sermon

LD1904115691 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 19 Apr 91

[Text] The glorious rites of the Friday prayers were performed throughout the country today, as on previous Fridays, by the revolutionary and faithful compatriots.

The Muslim and committed people of Tehran, meanwhile, were present in great numbers at Tehran University and in the adjacent streets for the serene Friday prayers which were led by Ayatollah Musavi-Ardebili.

On the occasion of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Day, in his prayer sermons Ayatollah Musavi-Ardebili praised the sacrifices made by the army personnel, the Islamic revolutionary Guards Corps, and mobilization and popular forces during the sacred defense. He then said: We cannot forget the services performed by these self-sacrificing strata.

Referring to the fact that Iranians regard the people of Iraq as their Muslim brothers, he stressed: for that very reason the Islamic Republic of Iran condemns the massacre of defenseless Iraqi people.

The acting Tehran Friday prayer leader asked our self-sacrificing compatriots to continue to help the Iraqi refugees who have sought asylum in Iran. He appealed to them to save the refugees from death by sending food, clothing, and other necessities.

Continuing his remarks, Ayatollah Musavi-Ardebili referred to the campaign against the improper observance of the Islamic dress code. He called on the officials to propagate cultural activities in an effort to obstruct the spread of social corruption and the infiltration of moribund Western culture into Islamic society. He emphasized the need for people to live simply and to shun luxurious life styles.

In concluding the sermons, Ayatollah Musavi-Ardebili informed the congregation of the situation of the Soviet Muslims and their interest in the Islamic revolution and our country's officials.

President Continues Visit to Fars Province

Meets With Students

LD2004114791 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 20 Apr 91

[Text] The president, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, continuing his tour of Fars Province, attended a gathering of students this morning in Shiraz. Describing the policies of the Government of the Islamic Republic in different fields, he answered questions from the students on different subjects. I draw your attention to a report from our colleague in Shiraz:

[Unidentifed correspondent] At the start of the gathering, during a speech, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani said: It will be impossible to achieve the fruits of the revolution and the people's jihad, and safeguard the revolution as a historical movement in the world, without strengthening and evolving the universities and the higher scientific centers. Pointing to the fact that the hopes of the officials of the system and the leader of the revolution are attached to the universities he said: One can feel the quantitative movement of the universities after the revolution. Based on a report, the number of students in Fars has increased from 4,000 to 20,000 since the revolution. One must also add the number of students in the Free University to this number.

Next, the president described the needs of society: eradication of deprivation in poor areas, the discriminating policies of the shah's regime, the recent oil war in the Persian Gulf; and the technological superiority in today's world. Addressing the university faculty and students he said: "I ask researchers to enter the field regardless of the level of work and good pay. Just as great

ones, in their humble laboratories, changed the history of human civilization and knowledge through blood and toil and perseverence, they should carry out such a mission. The system tries to create the necessary conditions for research.

Then the president began to furnish replies to numerous questions by the students in political, scientific, cultural, economic, and development fields.

On the issue of creating safe havens in Iraq and the danger of the renewed presence of foreign forces in the region he said: The presence of arrogant forces so close to us is dangerous in any form it may take. We can have a leading and basic role in the region by relying on the people and on our strength, and indeed by relying on the relationship that we enjoy with the Iraqi nation. Of course, we must be armed with our own wisdom.

The president rejected the suggestion that there was a lack of dynamism in the political activities in the universities. He said: Students are the most dynamic strata of the society. Our society is moving toward a destination that the students want. I do not see any lack of enthusiasm among the students.

In reply to a question on whether there was a deal involved in releasing Western hostages and Roger Cooper, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani stressed: Mrs. Lynda Chalker is coming to Tehran from England with the objective of helping the Iraqi refugees; we welcome that move. It is meaningless to relate that issue to the hostages. We have no link with the hostage taking groups; nor do we support them. As to Mr. Roger Cooper, the term of his sentence was for five years; that term ended and he returned. And Mr. Mehrdad Kowkabi who was a revolutionary person is now among us.

On relations with Egypt he said: Relations with Egypt have not been restored; rather, an interests section, which is specifically for the period when relations are cut off, has been set up there. That is because we have factory, bank, and a great deal of interests in that country.

Marks Armed Forces' Day

LD1804111791 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 18 Apr 91

[Excerpts] Armed Forces Day was marked in military garrisons all over the country today. During the ceremonies the Armed Forces were praised for their self-sacrifices in the holy defense [Iran-Iraq war] and their defense of Islam and the country. According to a Central News Unit report, ceremonies were held this morning in the presence of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani at Shiraz Infantry Center. We draw your attention to a report from our correspondent.

[Correspondent] Our country's president congratulated the audience on the occasion of Armed Forces Day. He expressed the hope that, by obeying divine decrees and following the ideals and wishes of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and obeying the orders of the commander-in-chief, we will be able to continue our path of freedom and independence toward attaining the country's Islamic identity.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani was speaking at the joint morning ceremonies of the Armed Forces and law enforcement forces stationed in Shiraz. [passage omitted]

Referring to Iran's reconstruction period, he stressed: Now that it is time for reconstruction, repairing the damage and safeguarding the future of the people and the country are our top priority. In this the Armed Forces can be the backbone of the country's reconstruction. He pointed out: At one stage during the war, the nation was behind the Armed Forces and for that reason, in the performacne of their duty, the popular forces were on the fronts. And today the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with all its facilities, are at the disposal of the country's reconstruction. [passage omitted]

The minister of defense and support for the Armed Forces, the president's entourage, the governor-general of Fars, military and security commanders, clergymen, and honorable families of martyrs were also present at the ceremonies. [passage omitted]

Hajj Agreement Announced

LD2104210491 Tehran IRNA in English 0950 GMT 21 Apr 91

[Text] Shiraz, Fars Prov., April 21, IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani wound up a four-day visit to this southern province and returned to the capital Saturday night.

In his first trip to this province since the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the president was accompanied by several cabinet ministers.

Speaking to reporters here before departure, Hashemi-Rafsanjani described his visit as successful and said "the province enjoys favourable weather conditions and has had excellent agricultural growth after the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution." He said that in a bid to promote the provincial exports new roads connecting the province to other parts of the country and to the Persian Gulf will be constructed. The president also said that plans are underway to canalize water and construct dams in this province. During his tour of the province, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani also visited the quake-stricken villages and the historical site of Persepolis near the provincial capital Shiraz.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani also spoke to the university students in Shiraz Saturday and discussed the current political developments. He said "the U.S.-led Allied forces had not foreseen the present situation (in Iraq) and now after several million human beings have become homeless, they are forced to set up 'safe havens'

for them." The setting up of such enclaves for the Iraqi Kurds by the Allied forces, said the president, is a passive action in the face of pressure exerted by the world public opinion.

On the recent resumption of ties with Saudi Arabia and the issue of Hajj, he said the late Imam khomeyni always wanted the Iranians to perform the annual pilgrimage "but the Saudis had continued to reject our terms for resumption of ties. Now, contrary to their wishes, they have consented to the holding of 'antipathy toward infidels' rallies during the Hajj, and also agreed to increase the number of Iranian pilgrims to the level acceptable to us."

On ties with Egypt and the recent opening of Iran's interest section in Cairo, Hashemi-Rafsanjani said the development does not mean establishment of ties. "The Egyptians were reluctant to have the office opened (Cairo) because of certain issues such as their fear of Iran's contact with the Egyptian revolutionaries."

He also described as "a fundamental policy" the expansion of good and friendly relations with the Persian Gulf littoral states, which he said "would have leaned towards the foreigners, if Iran had failed to promote ties with them."

*Imported Basics To Reach $1.8 Billion

91AS0809C London KEYHAN in Persian
4 Apr 91 p 4

[Text] The Ministry of Commerce of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the course of this year, spending $1.8 billion in foreign currency funds, will purchase essential goods, foodstuff and goods needed by the people from other countries. The economic sources announced that a major part of the foreign currency funds secured by the economic council of the Islamic Republic will be spent on the imports of foodstuff from Turkey, Thailand, Pakistan, Argentina, Germany, France, Ireland, England, Italy, Japan, Holland, Austria and several other countries. These sources added that the major items of foodstuff and essential imports by the regime include wheat, oil, oil seeds, sugar, rice, cheese, meat, tea and several other items. According to a report from Tehran, the officials of the Ministry of Commerce of the regime intend to continue to distribute coupons for consumer goods and foodstuff to the people.

Danesh Ashtiani, the deputy minister of commerce of the Islamic Republic, said some time ago in a radio and television interview that in 1370 [21 March 1991-20 March 1992], major changes would take place in the distribution of consumer goods. He added: "In 1369 [21 March 1990-20 March 1991], about 90 percent of coupons allocated were announced, and the goods were distributed."

Economic observers believe that the statements made by the deputy minister of commerce of the regime were made to quell the rumors concerning the halt in government subsidies, and on this basis, the provision of foodstuff by the government-affiliated agencies this year will continue to be implemented. Along with the announcement of securing the foreign currency funds to import essential goods and foodstuff by the government, a person involved in foodstuff trade said that at the present time, despite the claims of the officials of the regime in the area of reducing the inflation rate, the prices of most consumer goods and goods needed by the people are increasing, and the policy of freeing the import of goods by using open-market foreign currency (foreign currency at floating rates) has also contributed to the escalation of high prices and price hiking. The above-mentioned merchant said to KEYHAN that in the course of the past few weeks even that group of merchants and businessmen who earlier had kept some goods and foodstuff in their warehouses have started to calculate and ask the current price for their goods at the open-market foreign currency rate, and in this manner the inflation rate and high prices increase more than ever before.

A report from Tehran indicates that at the present time, the Ministry of Commerce and several other government agencies have also engaged in directly importing the items and foodstuff needed with non-government foreign currency. This action by the government organizations, especially the Ministry of Commerce, has given rise to the notion that the government intends to gradually expand the import of goods without the transfer of foreign currency and in this way to eliminate the issue of the use of foreign currency at the government rate for the import of foodstuff. Danesh Ashtiani, the deputy minister of commerce for the internal affairs of the Ministry of Commerce, responding to the question of what is the purpose of imports without the transfer of foreign currency by the Ministry of Commerce, said: "The Ministry of Commerce carries out the import of goods without the transfer of foreign currency in order to balance the market and will do so whenever there is an artificial price for one item." The above-mentioned official, referring to the actions of the Ministry of Commerce in the area of the import and distribution of some essential goods, said: "In 1369 [1990-91], about 2 million tires for light and heavy vehicles were distributed, and also in the past 8 months, about 300,000 tons of iron were distributed for national and provincial uses."

*Tehran-Saveh Highway Project Announced

91AS0809D London KEYHAN in Persian
4 Apr 91 p 4

[Text] Using investments made by the Tejarat and Mellat Banks, the Ministry of Roads and Transport of the Islamic Republic is attempting to connect Tehran, through Saveh and Arak, to Bandar Shahpur with a major highway. The officials of this ministry announced some time ago that the first phase of the Tehran-Bandar Shahpur highway project will be implemented this year, and the necessary investments, which will be made by

Mellat and Tejarat Banks, have been approved by the Monetary and Credit Council. Sa'idi-Kia, the minister of roads and transport of the Islamic Republic, also announced that this year the plan to repair the Ahvaz-Shushtar road, complete the reconstruction of Ahvaz-Khorramshahr railroad, repair the large Khorramshahr bridge and Tehran-Khuzestan highway to Ahvaz and from Ahvaz to Bandar Shahpur, and construct the Shushtar bridge and beltway will be implemented.

The minister of roads and transport, who had travelled to Dezful to visit the southern railroad facilities, said: "This year, 400 express sleeping cars and 96 diesel locomotives will be added to the railroads of the Islamic Republic." The above-mentioned official added: "To satisfy these needs, contracts have been made with factories for the purchase of 400 express sleeping cars, 96 diesel locomotives and 3,860 cargo cars, which will be delivered gradually within the next year to the Islamic Republic railroads."